

RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked the World



By Richie Realms

Many artists and musical forms played a role in the creation of rock, but arguably no single piece of music was more influential than the 1958 instrumental “Rumble” by American Indian rock guitarist and singer/songwriter Link Wray.

When recalling Link Wray’s shivering guitar classic, “Rumble,” Martin Scorsese marvels, “It is the sound of that guitar . . . that aggression.” “Rumble” was the first song to use distortion and feedback. It introduced the rock power chord – and was one of the very few instrumental singles to be banned from the radio for fear it would incite violence. RUMBLE explores how the Native American influence is an integral part of music history, despite attempts to ban, censor, and erase Indian culture in the United States.

As RUMBLE reveals, the early pioneers of the blues had Native as well as African American roots, and one of the first and most influential jazz singers’ voices was trained on Native American songs. As the folk rock era took hold in the 60s and 70s, Native Americans helped to define its evolution.

Father of the Delta Blues Charley Patton, influential jazz singer Mildred Bailey, metaphysical guitar wizard Jimi Hendrix, and folk heroine Buffy Sainte-Marie are among the many music greats who have Native American heritage and have made their distinctive mark on music history. For the most part, their Indian heritage was unknown.

RUMBLE uses playful re-creations and little-known stories, alongside concert footage, archives and interviews. The stories of these iconic Native musicians are told by some of America’s greatest music legends who knew them, played music with them, and were inspired by them: everyone from Buddy Guy, Quincy Jones, and Tony Bennett to Iggy Pop, Steven Tyler, and Stevie Nicks.

RUMBLE shows how Indigenous music was part of the very fabric of American popular music from the beginning, but that the Native American contribution was left out of the story – until now.

New York Lifestyle Magazine – June 2017 (2 of 3)

RUMBLE: THE INDIANS WHO ROCKED THE WORLD TO OPEN JULY 26, at Film Forum 209 W, Houston St., NYC, NY 212-727-8110 in New York City and July 28 at the Ted Rogers Hot Docs Cinema in Toronto before expanding to cities across the U.S. and Canada.

“Rumble is the greatest instrumental ever.”

Bob Dylan

“He’s the king. If it hadn’t been for Link Wray

and RUMBLE, I’d have never picked up a guitar.”

Pete Townsend

“If I could travel back in time to see one band,

it would be Link Wray and the Ray Men.” Neil Young

“He’s the man who invented punk rock, heavy metal and every other form of sonic nastiness that we hold dear.” Danny Frost, New Musical Express

“Link Wray made the guitar the weapon of choice in rock and roll.” Greg Laxton / Link Wray historian

Director Catherine Bainbridge, Co-director Alfonso Maiorana and Exec Producer Ernest Webb accepted the Rogers Audience Award

May 8, 2017

“RUMBLE” WINS ROGERS AUDIENCE AWARD FOR BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY AT HOT DOCS

The audiences have spoken! Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World won the inaugural Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary at Hot Docs. Rumble was announced as the winner prior to a free screening of the film at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema to close the festival.



March 1, 2017

**RUMBLE'S COLORADO PREMIERE WON
BIFF'S BEST MUSICAL DOCUMENTARY**

Catherine Bainbridge and co-director Alfonso Maiorana lovingly and truthfully illuminate an important and fascinating musical legacy.

March 1, 2017

**RUMBLE : THE INDIANS WHO ROCKED THE WORLD' DOCUMENTARY LANDS AT KINO
LORBER**

Kino Lorber has acquired most North American rights to Rezolution Pictures' documentary "Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World," and plans a summer theatrical release.

January 1, 2017

RUMBLE WINS AWARD AT SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Montreal-based filmmakers won the World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award for Masterful Storytelling for their film exploring the often-unheralded contributions of Native Americans in

Long Strange Trip: Grateful Dead documentary's maker had to prove himself

Amir Bar-Lev had to prove he was the right man before he could make his four-hour documentary *Long Strange Trip*.

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic
Sun., June 4, 2017

Whatever illusions filmmaker Amir Bar-Lev might have had about the Grateful Dead being an easygoing hippie band were dashed when he set out to make the documentary *Long Strange Trip* about the rock icons.

Surviving members Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Bill Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart may be psychedelically inclined gents, but they're no pushovers. They weren't going to let just anybody tell the official story of this classic American band, and neither was the estate of late singer/guitarist Jerry Garcia. A lot of people had tried and been turned down.

"I'm one in a long continuum of Deadheads who have come and said, 'Here's how I think I could help,' " says New York filmmaker Bar-Lev, 45, in an interview during the recent Hot Docs festival, where *Long Strange Trip* had its Canadian premiere (it's now online via Amazon Prime Video).

Ottawa-born David Lemieux, 46, had some say in the matter, since he's the band's audiovisual archivist and legacy manager, a gig he's had since 1999. He was the gatekeeper to the trove of music, studio and live performances sought by Bar-Lev, a documentary filmmaker best known for *The Tillman Story* and *My Kid Could Paint That*.

The band had talked for years about doing a career-spanning doc, but "nobody had the vision that our instincts said, 'This is the right guy,' " Lemieux says, joining the interview.

"And then we met with Amir, and instantly, he had the vision. And what that vision was, we didn't know. Specifically, he had no script. But he knew that this was a story that needed to be told. And we went out for coffee and we just talked for a couple hours and we became instant friends."



Amir Bar-Lev (in hat), director of Grateful Dead documentary *LONG Long Strange Trip*, is seen with Grateful Dead archivist and film's music supervisor David Lemieux while at the Park Hyatt

Toronto Star – June 4, 2017 (2 of 4)

hotel for the Hot Docs festival in May. (RICHARD LAUTENS / TORONTO STAR) | ORDER THIS PHOTO

Years later, *Long Strange Trip* — all four hours of it — made its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival this past January, blowing minds with its assertion that the officially interred (for now) San Francisco ensemble was “the most American of all bands,” if also the most elusive. And what’s with the *Frankenstein* connection? We discuss.

I love how you work in Jerry’s early fondness for *Frankenstein* movies with the band’s hippie ethos and its “Steal Your Face” skull logo with lightning bolt. How’d you make the connection?

Bar-Lev: They all connect with each other through Jungian dream logic. The lightning bolt in our film is explained by (longtime band roadie) Steve Parish, who says — and I had never thought of this, by the way — that it’s enlightenment. In the *Frankenstein* movie, it’s the animating force. It’s what takes this corpse and turns it into a seemingly living thing. What’s alive and what’s dead is also a huge way of understanding of what this story is about.

The film gives the impression that Jerry was a control freak, which seems to run counter to the popular image him as a laid-back guy.

Bar-Lev: I think Jerry was a control freak who had serious misgivings about that side of his personality. And that’s why we put it at the very beginning of the film, the anecdote in which he says he saw the *Frankenstein* movie as a kid and he was terrified, but he decided that he wanted to make a friend of that monster. In kind of a symbolic, psychological way, it’s him saying, “There’s something that’s other than me that compels me, and rather than going away from it, I’m going to try and bring it closer to me. Embrace the monster.”

Lemieux: Jerry’s words had weight, a lot of weight. And maybe he didn’t speak that much. Maybe he didn’t assert that very often. But when he did, it meant a lot. I don’t know if I’d call him a control freak, but I’d definitely say that his words had weight. When something was important, he let it be known. But I don’t think his veto was more important than any of the others. If Bob or Mickey didn’t want to do something, say, it just wasn’t done.

Let’s talk about the music. *Long Strange Trip* isn’t a greatest hits catalogue of the Dead. You barely play “Truckin’,” for example. Why?

Bar-Lev: We had to play the music to serve the film, not the other way around. Ultimately we wanted it to be a successful film. The fun thing about it is, when you’re editing, you’re kind of creating a hologram, where you’re aware of things that are going to happen in the film, but obviously the audience isn’t going to be, so you’re creating a symbolic architecture that is non-linear in a way. I’m making it sound more cosmic than it is.

Lemieux: The music selection was based on “What is the perfect music for this scene?” I never saw it as anything like, “Hey, let’s slip in some very rare music that nobody knows, or the deeper cuts, or for the deeper fans.” It was just the right music for that time.

But you couldn't find space for "Box of Rain"?

Bar-Lev: The "Box of Rain" omission weighs on me. We just couldn't find a home for it. And I tried to the bitter end to get "Unbroken Chain" in.

Lemieux: But I like that you didn't wedge music in just because it needed to be in there.

Amir, I hear it took you years to actually meet the surviving Dead members.

Bar-Lev: I never wanted to meet the band. See, that was one thing that happened. Somebody said, "You know that they don't know you." And I said, "They don't need to know me. They've got plenty of friends. I've got plenty of friends. If they want to look at my films and hear my pitch, they should do that. But I don't want to be yet another sycophant hanging out getting stoned with Bob Weir."

Even with a four-hour running length, you end the film in 1995 with Jerry's untimely passing. Why not continue with the band member's various solo projects and reconfigurations?

Bar-Lev: The film wants to end that way; it wants to end with a baton being passed to you, the viewer, and that is really Jerry saying, "I hope this thing goes on in some ways."

Lemieux: That was a conscious choice from day one, I'd say. We had a meeting, although there wasn't a lot of discussion about it. We all just agreed. This movie ends at 1995. The story certainly doesn't, but this movie ends at 1995, the Grateful Dead.

Could the show still go on? The band had its 50th anniversary "Fare Thee Well" concerts in 2015 that were supposed to be the final raising of the Dead.

Bar-Lev: It depends on what you define as "the Grateful Dead."

Lemieux: Was "Fare Thee Well" the final time for those four guys to be onstage together? I think so, that's what they said, but we've got Dead and Company, we've got "An Evening With Phil Weir," and certainly with Grateful Dead tapes, CDs and movies, the music is never going to end. I listen to Grateful Dead music every day, so it's still a huge part of my life, every single day. And I know it will be for the next 20 years.

This interview was edited and condensed.

Long Strange Trip (Amir Bar-Lev)

Anybody who thinks a four-hour doc on the Grateful Dead is excessive probably also thinks it's weird to collect dozens of live tapes of "Althea" or "Dark Star." The Dead have always ignored limits, man. But this film, lovingly assembled and rich in music and memories, persuasively makes the case the group was also "the most American of all bands." You don't have to be a

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Deadhead to get caught up in this epic rock saga, especially when late bandleader Jerry Garcia tearfully gets his due.

Peter Howell

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/06/04/long-strange-trip-grateful-dead-documentarys-maker-had-to-prove-himself.html>

She Does the City – June 5, 2017

ATTIYA KHAN'S 'A BETTER MAN' RETURNS TO HOT DOCS

POSTED ON JUNE 5, 2017

If you missed Attiya Khan's powerful doc about intimate partner violence, responsibility and reconciliation, now's your chance. *A Better Man* will be screening at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema June 9–21. Khan will attend three Q&As during the film's opening weekend, on Friday, June 9, at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, June 10, at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, June 11, at 8:45 p.m.

A Better Man traces back twenty-two years, when Attiya was eighteen years old and running for her life. She was fleeing an ex-boyfriend, Steve, who'd been abusing her. Now, all these years later, Attiya has asked Steve to meet with her in a coffee shop. Attiya has long moved on with her life, but she continues to bear the emotional scars of their time together. She wants to know how Steve remembers their relationship and how he justifies what he did to her. She wants to know what scars, if any, he bears as well. Most importantly, she wants to know if Steve is willing to take responsibility for his actions.

A Better Man offers a fresh and nuanced look at the healing and revelation that can happen for everyone involved when men take responsibility for their abuse. It also empowers audience members to play new roles in challenging domestic violence, whether it's in their own relationships or as part of a broader movement for social change.

Get tickets [here](#).

<http://www.shedoesthecity.com/attiya-khans-a-better-man-returns-to-hot-docs>

Review: 'Sacred,' a documentary by Thomas Lennon

Andrew Parker June 8, 2017 3:00 am



For the documentary *Sacred*, director Thomas Lennon has cobbled together the footage of forty filmmaking teams from around the world to create a look at how religious beliefs impact daily life. It's a great idea for a long-form series, or possibly a trilogy of movies based around the subjects and themes at hand, but it strains to find any sort of footing as a feature, despite a refreshing lack of posturing and a wealth of good intentions.

Lennon divides the footage he has generously been provided into three categories: Initiation, which covers birth to teenage years, Practice, covering adulthood, and Passage, covering one's twilight years. It's an interesting structure, and on paper a sound approach to looking at the varied and numerous systems of belief around the world. Each period of a person's life comes with a different set of customs, rituals, and practices that are determined by age.

The problem isn't so much in the approach as it is in the execution and lack of overall depth. Clocking in at barely over 80 minutes, some stories get developed more than others, and some tantalizingly intriguing looks at religious practices rarely seen on camera as jettisoned to the side for more easily palatable human interest stories with bigger emotional hooks. The approach of all the crews working on *Sacred* is uniform in style and substance, meaning that although a lot of different voices are being heard on camera – from orphans in Pakistan to a man burying loved ones who died of Ebola in Africa to a leader of an online prayer community in Connecticut – they all have the same static feeling when put on camera. Any one of the stories captured in *Sacred* could be its own film, but to have them told in the exact same way throughout feels inorganic and slightly disingenuous.



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There's also a lot of overlap thematically between all three sections that blur the lines, with some stories fitting better in other parts of the film than where they've been placed. *Sacred* has a less than sound sense of construction and flow, and not because of any sort of purposeful experimentation with documentary form, but rather because it staunchly wants to remain uniform and neat throughout. This is a problem that could have easily been fixed if *Sacred* was a 40 part series, or even if it had been split into three separate feature films where the parallels could be more subtly coaxed from the footage, but Lennon can't help but follow what he finds personally interesting instead of letting the audience decide for themselves. It purports to be a film for everyone to learn and grow from, but it all comes from the singular point of view of the person putting the footage together. The editorial decisions necessary to make *Sacred* couldn't have been easy, but pondering the decisions made by Lennon sometimes strikes as more interesting than the film itself.

Considering how frequently and regularly religions clash and differ throughout humanity, *Sacred* feels unnecessarily homogenized, despite remaining understandably and admirably objective in its aims to never place one system of beliefs in a negative light when compared to others. I think it wants to be a film about celebrating differences and making people take note of similarities, but Lennon provides what I like to refer to as "the *LIFE Magazine*" version of a documentary on his intended subject. *Sacred*, stripped of any sort of length and depth to work with, provides snapshots of life that unfold as they would on several pages of a magazine, with maximum imagery, minimal verbal input, and some passages given more space to work with. It looks fine, and some of the stories captured are thought provoking and moving, but *Sacred* has trouble coming up with the sum of its parts.

Sacred opens at The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Friday, June 9, 2017.

Toronto Star – June 8, 2017

Reel Brief: Mini reviews of Churchill, Megan Leavey, A Better Man, and It Comes at Night

By **BRUCE DEMARA** Entertainment Reporter

PETER HOWELL Movie Critic

RAJU MUDHAR Tech Reporter

Thu., June 8, 2017

A Better Man



Written and directed by Attiya Khan and Lawrence Jackman. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 87 minutes. 14A

Prepare yourself. This is not an easy film to watch.

The issue is domestic violence, a pervasive and corrosive part of our culture. How the subject is approached here is rather novel.

Attiya Khan was still a teenager when she fled a two-year relationship with a high school boyfriend she'd been living with.

Somehow she persuades Steve (no last name) to revisit the relationship more than 20 years later. They meet with a counsellor and even travel together to Ottawa to explore old haunts.

Khan is still dealing with the trauma so many years later and the process is intended to heal.

Steve, who agrees to go on record and on camera to talk, is clearly remorseful and somewhat candid as he and Khan try to reconstruct the past from fragmented memories.

It's not a perfect film by any means but it explores a painful subject intelligently and respectfully.

It's also a great place to begin a conversation that many of us need to have.

B.D.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/06/08/reel-brief-mini-reviews-of-churchill-megan-leavey-a-better-man-and-it-comes-at-night.html>

Toronto Japanese Film Festival shows Godzilla's return to form

The giant radioactive lizard has appeared in 30 features over a span of 63 years. The latest in the series is titled *Shin Godzilla*.



Shin Godzilla was the highest-grossing live-action Japanese feature in Japan last year and the winner of seven prizes at the country's national film awards, including Best Picture. The kaiju mayhem plays the Toronto Japanese Film Festival on June 18. (TJFF)

By **JASON ANDERSON** Special to the Star
Fri., June 9, 2017

Toronto Japanese Film Festival: Most movie stars would seem a little tired after appearing in 30 features over a span of 63 years (not including his American-made outings) so you've got to give it up for Japan's most famous giant radioactive lizard. The latest in the long-running kaiju movie series, *Shin Godzilla* has been widely praised as return to form for the big green one. Indeed, it was the highest-grossing live-action Japanese feature in Japan last year and the winner of seven prizes at the country's national film awards, including Best Picture. A surprisingly savvy combination of traditional *kaiju* mayhem and the sort of social satire more commonly found in Korean blockbusters, *Shin Godzilla* plays the Toronto Japanese Film Festival on June 18.

The TJFF has become a reliably generous and diverse showcase of recent faves among critics and audiences in Asia that may have had little circulation in the rest of the world. One such example is *Satoshi: A Move for Tomorrow*, a suitably dignified biopic about a revered master of the Japanese game of shogi that plays its Canadian premiere on June 11. A North American premiere for the TJFF on June 15, *Honnouji Hotel* is a hit comedy about a modern young woman who gets into trouble with samurai warriors after accidentally tumbling into a time portal to the 16th century. A movie that makes a more straightforward but still compelling embrace of period action tropes, *Mumon: The Land of Stealth* pits samurais against ninjas and we couldn't be happier. The TJFF hosts the movie's North American premiere on June 28.

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Mumon director Yoshihiro Nakamura is one of the fest's many filmmaker guests. On June 12, the TJFF is understandably proud to present a performance by Toronto taiko-drumming group Nagata Shachu along with a screening of *The Ondekoza*, a recently rediscovered 1981 documentary about one of Japan's founding taiko ensembles.

The TJFF runs to June 28 at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (6 Garamond Ct.).

Funeral Parade of Roses: In what's certainly the cultiest of cult-movie screenings this week, VICE and the Royal co-present a new 4K restoration of one of the weirdest movies of the Japanese New Wave. Initially released in 1969, *Funeral Parade of Roses* is an assaultive drama by director Toshio Matsumoto that delves deep into Tokyo's underbelly. With its often disturbing images of youth run amok and its high-velocity, high-impact editing, Matsumoto's film had a direct influence on the look that Stanley Kubrick devised for *A Clockwork Orange*. You too can join the parade at the Royal on June 9.

Italian Contemporary Film Festival: Founded in 2012, the ICFF has rapidly grown into the largest Italian film festival outside of Italy, with simultaneous editions in six Canadian cities this week. TIFF Bell Lightbox and Cineplex Cinemas Vaughan both host showcases of new Italian features, doc and shorts to June 16 — highlights from the slate include the romantic drama *7 Days*, the culinary-themed romance *The Space Between* and a special focus on Italian-Canadian films like Paul Tana's very fine 1992 period drama *La Sarrasine*.

Canadian Sport Film Festival: Founded in 2008 to celebrate sport's power as an agent for social change, the Canadian Sport Film Festival returns this weekend for a program of screenings and events at TIFF Bell Lightbox. It begins June 9 with the Toronto premiere of *Keepers of the Game*, a documentary about an Indigenous girls' lacrosse squad in Fort Covington, N.Y. Other new docs at the CSFF include *Hillsborough*, a look at the British soccer tragedy that killed 96 people in 1989, and *Crossing the Line*, a profile of Danny Harris, an American hurdler who battled depression and drug addiction after winning a silver medal at the 1984 Olympics. The Canadian Sport Film Festival runs June 9-11.

Scarborough International Film Festival: The fifth annual SIFF continues its run in various east-end venues, including Scarborough Bluffers' Park. That serves as an appropriately scenic venue for a free screening of *2001: A Space Odyssey* on June 10. The festival also presents a 25th anniversary showing of *Wayne's World* (starring Scarborough's pride and joy Mike Myers) on June 9 at Albert Campbell Square. Meanwhile, the cinephile-friendly slate at the Fox includes the Chilean drama *The Blind Christ* and *Loving Pia*, a Danish doc that recently debuted at the Berlin festival. The SIFF runs to June 11.

Sacred: American director Thomas Lennon collaborated with dozens of filmmaking teams all over the world to gather images depicting rituals and expressions of faith and devotion in every corner of the globe. The result is *Sacred*, an optimistic look at spirituality that plays June 9-13 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

In Brief:

- The aluCine Latin Film and Media Arts Festival continues at various venues to June 11.

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- Cineplex's National Theatre Live program presents director Sally Cookson's recent production of *Peter Pan* on June 10 and 11.
- Also at participating Cineplex locations, the Exhibition On Screen series offers views of the National Gallery's *Michelangelo: Love and Death* on June 14 and 18.
- A landmark work that the NFB originally created for Expo 67, *Into The Labyrinth* screens with Rodney Graham's early short *Two Generators* at the Lightbox on June 15.

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DOC EXPLORES: IS THERE SUCH A THING AS ISRAELI CUISINE?

By **Jordan Adler**

June 19, 2017



A "classic" Israeli breakfast. FLICKR

Israel has the highest percentage of vegans per capita. Its wineries in the Golan Heights, which produce millions of bottles a year, frequently rank among the best in the world. And the food scene in Tel Aviv-Jaffa is thriving: *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine recently named it one of the planet's five best culinary cities.

As filmmaker Roger Sherman explores in *In Search of Israeli Cuisine*, there are many misconceptions about the quantity of fine dining options, as well as the quality of the street food, in Israel.

"You can sample every country (with citizens) that have either come to Israel, or never left," Sherman says. "There's so much there."

The dazzling diversity of food options will be on display when the documentary opens for a week at the Ted Rogers Hot Docs Cinema in Toronto, beginning June 16.



Roger Sherman, right, with chef Michael Solomonov

The Canadian Jewish News – June 19, 2017 (2 of 3)

A major reason for this culinary renaissance is the blending of different styles and techniques of cooking. With Israel being the home to immigrants from Russia, Morocco, Turkey, Greece and other countries with a rich history of food, there are opportunities for chefs to make inventive and idiosyncratic dishes.

To keep audiences enthralled, Sherman found a helpful guide, award-winning Philadelphia chef Michael Solomonov.

Even with a notable expert on the local cuisine hosting the journey, Sherman says Solomonov hadn't been to many of the places featured in the doc.

"We had a spreadsheet a mile long," he says, referring to the list of restaurants the crew hoped to visit. "We have an hour-and-a-half of fully cut scenes that are not in the film."

One common theme in the doc, which informs the title, is figuring out the difference between Israeli cuisine and traditional Jewish meals.

The film shows that it took many decades after Israel's establishment to cultivate its own, unique cuisine. Originally, many new arrivals cooked dishes originating from the countries they came from.

Today, there exists a union of different cooking traditions informing Israel's most savoured dishes. At the same time, chefs are blending these new flavours with traditional "mother's cooking."

But some of the people interviewed for the film disagree with its premise, explaining that there is no such thing as Israeli cuisine. A couple of journalists note that the country is still too young, and its food options stem from too many regions, to create a proper national flavour.

There are also misconceptions about the kinds of people who live in Israel, Sherman says. Many Israelis are neither religious, nor observant of kosher dietary laws. (To highlight this point, *In Search of Israeli Cuisine* has many shots of Solomonov and local chefs slurping down seafood.)

The Canadian Jewish News – June 19, 2017 (3 of 3)

One creative decision of Sherman's was not to go into the West Bank to scope out the culinary scene there, saying that the story would "get completely bogged down" by political content.

Regardless, he interviews Palestinian chefs working in Israel, who expose a pertinent political element to Israel's culinary renaissance.

Lebanese-Palestinian chef Kamel Hashlamon says that there is tension when Israeli chefs appropriate Palestinian dishes.

Others view the sharing of these recipes as a potential road map to peace. In the doc, Israeli baker Erez Komarovsky says that food is collaborative and creative, and therefore "not political."

Sherman tells *The CJN* that he tried to ensure that *In Search of Israeli Cuisine* didn't become a feature-length promotional video.

"I wanted it to be about the Israeli people, but told through food," he says.

Accordingly, Sherman has one piece of advice for audiences before they purchase a ticket: "Eat first."

Reel Brief: Mini reviews of *Okja*, *The Bad Batch* and *The B-Side*

Reel Brief reviews of three new films in cinemas, plus *The Lodger* and *T2 Trainspotting* on DVD.



Tilda Swinton and Ahn Seo-Hyun in *Okja*. (BARRY WETCHER / NETFLIX)

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic

BRUCE DEMARA Entertainment Reporter

Thu., June 22, 2017

Okja

Starring Tilda Swinton, Jake Gyllenhaal, Paul Dano and Ahn Seo-Hyun. Directed by Bong Joon Ho. Opens June 28 at TIFF Bell Lightbox. 120 minutes. **STC**

Okja is a populist enviro-fable that's part pet-rescue drama, part mad farce, all Bong Joon Ho. But it's emphatically not for children.

Fresh from its controversial Cannes premiere, and making a big-screen stop at TIFF while simultaneously going wide on Netflix, it stars South Korean actress Ahn Seo-Hyun as Mija, a farm girl in the mountains outside Seoul. She befriends a "super pig" named Okja, which was raised under contract to a corporate food giant called the Mirando Corporation.

"Mirando" is Spanish for "admirable," and the irony is undoubtedly intended by genre-blending writer/director Bong (*Snowpiercer*, *The Host*). The company talks a virtuous game of feeding the planet, with Tilda Swinton's CEO Lucy Mirando as captivated with her corporate message as she is with her public image. But in reality the company is a worldwide network of factory butchers. Mirando wants Okja's plentiful pork on everybody's fork.

Although Okja is referred to as a pig, she resembles an elephant with the head of a dog and she's as loyal to Mija as any canine would be. Mija proves herself to be every bit as steadfast as her pet after Okja is "pignapped" and taken to America by Lucy Mirando and her TV-showman

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accomplice Dr. Johnny Wilcox, played by Jake Gyllenhaal, with both actors seriously chewing the shrubbery in their portrayals.

Mija sets out on a spirited quest to rescue Okja before the humble beast ends up in Mirando's factory slaughterhouse, a place Bong reveals with no quarter given for sensitive viewers. Humans don't get off much better: Mija allies with a group of pro-animal activists led by Jay (Paul Dano), a smooth-talking but violence-prone individual who is not above administering beatings to anyone who crosses him, be they friend or foe.

Operating as both affecting rescue drama and screwball farce, *Okja* has some great chase sequences that really benefit from the big screen.

But it's certainly no *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, despite its superficial resemblance to Steven Spielberg's childhood classic. *Okja* contains a large amount of profanity and visceral brutality, more than frankly seems necessary even for a film aimed at an adult audience.

Bong has never been one for half measures, but audience members at the June 28 screening can ask the man himself. He'll be available by Skype for a Q&A session immediately after *Okja*, which will in turn be followed by the filmmaker's 2000 feature *Barking Dogs Never Bite*.

Peter Howell

The Bad Batch

Starring Suki Waterhouse, Jason Momoa. Written and directed by Ana Lily Amirpour. Opens Friday at TIFF Bell Lightbox. 118 minutes. **STC**



Arlen (Suki Waterhouse) and Miami Man (Jason Momoa) brace for a fight in *The Bad Batch*. (SYSTEM)

This isn't a film likely to appeal to all tastes, gastronomic or otherwise.

But leave it to filmmaker Ana Lily Amirpour to give us a bold, original and grisly (or perhaps gristly) vision of the near future.

The story opens with the exile of newest Bad Batcher Arlen (Suki Waterhouse). As the (possibly Trumpian) wall closes behind her, Arlen faces a desert wasteland south of Texas and a bleak future. Bleak indeed as she's soon kidnapped by cannibals who begin to harvest her piece by piece.

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After a remarkable escape, Arlen finds her way to Comfort, ruled by a drug pusher named The Dream.

When Arlen inadvertently kidnaps his daughter, an angry cannibal named Miami Man (Jason Momoa) comes in hot pursuit. Nothing turns out quite how you expect it to.

Waterhouse is kick-ass good and Momoa brings smouldering menace while and Keanu Reeves is an aptly oily despot. An unrecognizable Jim Carrey has a small but pivotal role as a desert hermit.

Brace yourself for a dark, nasty and surprisingly enjoyable ride.

Bruce DeMara

The B-Side: Elsa Dorfman's Portrait Photography

Documentary on photographer Elsa Dorfman. Directed by Errol Morris. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 76 minutes. **PG**



Elsa Dorfman and Allen Ginsberg in Errol Morris doc The B-Side.

So shy she rarely faces the camera, the humble subject of Errol Morris' new documentary is refreshingly unpretentious about her portrait photography: "I'm totally not interested in capturing their soul."

But even though the recently retired Elsa Dorfman, 80, claims to seek only the "surface" with her photos, often shooting with a rare large-format Polaroid camera, she achieves a natural grace that recalls the unschooled charm of artist of Maud Lewis. The frame radiates joy.

Morris encourages the Cambridge, Mass., photog to reminisce about such famous subjects as musicians Bob Dylan and Jonathan Richman and the late Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, the latter a close friend since before she took up photography as a self-described curious "starer" at the age of 28.

The film's title refers to her practice of keeping the second-best shots, the others being sold or rendered to Polaroid. Her stories are great, especially the one about Dorfman gate-crashing Dylan's Rolling Thunder Revue in 1975. It would have been nice to hear more of them.

PH

The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog

Starring Ivor Novello, June Tripp, Marie Ault and Malcolm Keen. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Out June 27 on DVD. 91 minutes. **STC**



Ivor Novello stars in *The Lodger*, an early film by Alfred Hitchcock.

More than Alfred Hitchcock completists would find value in this 1927 B&W silent film by the master of suspense, restored in a 2K digital release by Criterion that includes a new score by composer Neil Brand.

Hitchcock's third feature was the first to truly exhibit the traits he'd become famous for, including mistaken identity (*The Wrong Man*, *North by Northwest*) and sexual obsession (*Vertigo*, *Marnie*). There's the influence of German Expressionism, too, in the dramatic lighting and camera angles.

The Lodger stars Ivor Novello as a man suspected by his landlady of killing women in foggy London. The murderer has a particular yen for blondes, as did the director, whose penchant for cameo appearances also started here.

Novello reprised his role in the 1932 remake-with-sound *The Phantom Fiend*, directed by Maurice Elvey. Hitchcock declined; he'd already said a lot without yet bowing to "the talkies."

Blu-ray and DVD editions differ for plentiful extras, which include essays and interviews, among them Hitchcock chats with fellow filmmakers François Truffaut and Peter Bogdanovich.

PH

T2 Trainspotting (DVD)

Starring Ewan McGregor, Robert Carlyle, Jonny Lee Miller and Ewen Bremner. Directed by Danny Boyle. Out June 27 on DVD. 117 minutes. **18A**



Ewan McGregor, left, and Jonny Lee Miller in T2: Trainspotting. (JAAP BUITENDIJK)

No boring Hollywood redemption here. A generation after Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* shocked and amused with the junkie antics of frenemies Renton (Ewan McGregor), Begbie (Robert Carlyle), Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller) and Spud (Ewen Bremner), the lads are still the same screw-ups.

Cunning catalyst Renton (Ewan McGregor), has been hiding out in Amsterdam after stealing that big bag of cash from his erstwhile chums. Flash man Sick Boy is running a sex blackmailing operation with his new girlfriend/combatant Veronika (Anjela Nedyalkova). Head case Begbie (Robert Carlyle) busting out of prison, where he's been for the past 20 years. Sad sack Spud (Ewen Bremner) is still on the junk, a habit that, along with suicidal depression, could leave him like the group's lost pal Tommy (RIP).

Events transpire to bring the lads back together in Edinburgh, although Boyle and returning screenwriter John Hodge, once again adapting the prose of Irvine Welsh (*Trainspotting*, *Porno*), tease out the inevitable reckoning.

Extras include deleted scenes and a director/screenwriter commentary.

PH

Projections: Documentary shorts examine Canadian identity on its 150th anniversary

Filmmaking teams tackled stories ranging from a Sudanese-born Canadian's struggle against false allegations of terrorism to a landmark Supreme Court case on Indigenous rights.



In the Name of All Canadians, consisting of six short documentaries, makes its world premiere at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on June 28. (HOT DOCS)

By **JASON ANDERSON**
Fri., June 23, 2017

In the Name of All Canadians: For some Canadians, marking the 150th anniversary of the country's founding means cruising from one national park to another and getting into bear-related hijinks just like John Candy in *The Great Outdoors*. Yet others have seen the occasion as an opportunity to ask what it means to be Canadian in this day and age and confront sometimes discomfiting questions about identity, history and the rights so many of us take for granted.

Such timely matters all come into play in *In the Name of All Canadians*, a new omnibus film that makes its world premiere at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on June 28. Commissioned by Hot Docs for Canada 150, it consists of six short docs inspired by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. A series of acclaimed filmmaking teams from across the country tackled stories ranging from a Sudanese-born Canadian's struggle against false allegations of terrorism to a Jamaican-Canadian lawyer's inspirational efforts to escape his crack-dealing past to a landmark Supreme Court case on Indigenous rights. Advance tickets for the premiere event are already sold out but rush tickets will be available on Wednesday. More screenings follow June 30-July 6.

Outdoor screenings: This week sees the beginning of some of the city's most popular summer outdoor screening series. The Christie Pits Film Festival launches its seventh season in the dip at the corner of Christie and Bloor on Sunday with the Harold Lloyd classic *The Freshman*, presented with a live score by the Holy Gasp. The Open Roof Festival returns to 99 Sudbury on Tuesday with its own movie-and-music pairing of *Colossal* and a performance by Stacey Renee. Also on Tuesday, Bob and Doug McKenzie (a.k.a. Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas) star in the immortal *Strange Brew* at Yonge-Dundas Square for City Cinema's inaugural event.

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Harbourfront Centre's Free Flicks at the Concert Stage continues with *The Sun at Midnight* on Wednesday.

What the Film Festival: Most definitely the week's most confounding movie event, What the Film Festival (WTFF) returns to the Royal Cinema on Friday for a seven-hour marathon of "eccentric" moviemaking that defies categorization, description and quite possibly the boundaries of good taste. This year's finds include *Bloody Muscle Body Builder in Hell*, a DIY Japanese remake-slash-remodel of Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* that was nearly 20 years in the making, and *She's Allergic to Cats*, an equally bizarre curio by a filmmaker who funded his effort with money he earned working as a body double for Daft Punk (and no, I didn't make that up). The WTFF has many more movies that will make you say WTF.

Creative Visions: Hong Kong Cinema 1997-2017: Before the U.K. handed sovereignty over Hong Kong to China in 1997, there were grave worries about the health of the region's traditionally robust film industry. But while there have been many changes in the years since, Hong Kong cinema remains uncommonly vibrant. Reel Asian serves as the Toronto host for a ten-city commemorative event marking the 20th anniversary of the handover. Titled Creative Visions, the special series consists of eight films screening June 23-25 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox — must-sees include the much-imitated thriller *Infernal Affairs*, Stephen Chow's wild comedy *Kung Fu Hustle* and Wong Kar-wai's sublime *The Grandmaster*. Director Heiward Mak also visits Toronto for an artist's talk and to present her acclaimed teen drama *High Noon* on Sunday.

Contact Dance: As you might expect, the action at the Contact Dance International Film Festival extends far beyond what you might see on screen, with live performances, inclusive workshops and other events in unexpected locations all over town from June 28 to July 2. Of course, you can start with the screening program of dance-centric cinema at the showcase of Toronto dancers and filmmakers on Wednesday at Dovercourt House (805 Dovercourt Rd.). More screenings take place at the Celia Franca Centre and the Revue.

In Brief:

- A romantic dramedy set in Niagara's wine country starring Flashpoint's Enrico Colantoni, *The Colossal Failure of the Modern Relationship* opens Friday at the Carlton.
- Highlights in the last days at the Toronto Japanese Film Festival include the Canadian premiere of *In This Corner of the World*, an animated feature that also just won the TJFF's grand jury prize — it plays Tuesday at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre.
- *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* screens Tuesday to Thursday at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts with a live score by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Amadeus Choir's Women's Chorus and the Elmer Iseler Singers.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/06/23/projections-documentary-shorts-examine-canadian-identity-on-its-150th-anniversary.html>

Review: 'In the Name of All Canadians'

Hot Docs original production marks Canada 150 with self-reflection

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published June 26th, 2017 | [Comment](#)



In the Name of All Canadians

(Canada, 75 min.)

Dir. Vivian Belik, Karen Chapman, Aisha Jamal, Khoa Lê, Annick Marion, Ariel Nasr, Patrick Reed, Andréa Schmidt, Jérémie Wookey

Earlier this year, [TIFF](#) artistic director Cameron Bailey posed a fair challenge to Canadian filmmakers. In a *Globe & Mail* piece titled '[Dear Canadian filmmakers: it's not about you, it's about us](#)', Bailey wrote, "What if we stopped pretending that Canada is safe, nice and boring enough to leave off the big screen, while we focus on personal fictions? Instead, we could rip the lid off and reveal very Canadian acts of deceit, murder, betrayal and corruption that happen every day across this great country." Bailey's query largely points towards fiction filmmakers in Canada, noting, "Our documentaries tackle climate change, indigenous rights, urban poverty and other pressing, current social issues."



Lessons Injustice

Courtesy of Hot Docs

Nonetheless, documentary ups the ante in a new original production from Toronto's other big festival, [Hot Docs](#), that directly tackles the corruption and prejudice that shape the nation from coast to coast. *In the Name of All Canadians* is the major Canada 150 project from Hot Docs

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – June 26, 2017 (2 of 4)

and this inclusive anthology film addresses the concerns that Bailey identifies as rarely being considered in stories about nice, snowy, ho-hum Canada. The film is one of the few logical Canada 150 initiatives for assessing the nation in a productive way.

The six vignettes offer personal narratives about Canadians who struggle to enjoy the rights and liberties promised to all citizens of this nation in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These six short docs, each made by a unique filmmaker or filmmaking team, focus on stories of oppression and alienation that exist for cultural minorities in Canada. The accounts are all troublesome for their immediacy and each film emphasizes the strength and resilience of their subjects.



L'inspecteur

Courtesy of Hot Docs

L'inspecteur, directed by Jérémie Wookey and Annick Marion, intertwines the stories of three Franco-Manitobans with animated sequences in many languages. The three elderly women reflect on their experiences as young students and teachers in Manitoba's education system only a few decades ago. They recall all their classes being taught in English to assimilate the Francophones through the suppression of their language. The teacher gives vivid memories about the school board's dismissive language inspector invading the classrooms to detect renegade traces of French. The stories of quiet rebellion, like the memory of a student keeping a lookout to alert the teacher of the inspector's arrival or that of a young girl responding to the language inspector's question "What is a beach?" with the innocent reply, "A female dog," offer words of humour, courage, and hope. This retrospective account illustrates the necessity of protecting education in all official languages to preserve distinct cultures and provide common ground.

New Canadians find their voice in Aisha Jamal and Ariel Nasr's *The Long Way Home*, which chronicles the plight of Abousfian Abdelrazik after his 2003 arrest and detention in the Sudan at the behest of the Canadian government. This chilling account of the Sudanese-Canadian's six-year fight to return home, as well as the efforts of activists fighting in Canada for his release, offers a damning account of contemporary Canadian politics that has seen increased infringements on the rights of new Canadians. This documentary confronts with pointed passion the question of how a country driven by immigration can backslide into making a Charter of Rights and Freedom's appeal an act that applies to only select citizens in an era of increased Islamophobia and xenophobia. Particularly as Canada 150 coincides with the peak of conservative chaos south of the border, Jamal and Nasr's fierce and challenging interrogation of inequality at home is a necessary piece to consider.



Notwithstanding
Courtesy of Hot Docs

Race figures prominently in two other docs, *Lessons Injustice* directed by Karen Chapman and *Notwithstanding* by Patrick Reed and Andrea Schmidt. These two films take very different approaches to concerns of exclusion, racial profiling, and prejudice. *Lessons Injustice* offers a fleeting verité-style drive around Toronto as lawyer Danardo Jones explains to his son his experience growing up in the face of anti-black racism that, unfortunately, continues as the next generation comes of age. One senses Jones's frustration as the film cuts methodically between shots of the driver and scenes of urban streets, Chapman pulls the story together with an air of timelessness that haunts. *Notwithstanding*, on the other hand, offers a work of "speculative documentary" that considers a very possible reality in which the controversial Notwithstanding Clause could be invoked if the nation finds itself swept up in the right-wing wave of politics rippling across the globe. (The clause allows Parliament or provincial legislatures to override portions of the Charter.) Several Arab-Canadians discuss cases in which they experienced Islamophobia firsthand, like a woman who had a court case tossed out because she refused to remove her hijab in court and a teenager who tells a chilling story of living in a remote camp for refugees. These stories, like Jones's case, Abdelrazik's saga, and the history of Franco-Manitobans, offer essential acts of resistance that make the country stronger by challenging violations of fundamental rights we assume all Canadians enjoy.



Last Resort
Courtesy of Hot Docs

Last Resort, arguably the standout film of the anthology, comes from Vivian Belik and injects another timely court case to the narrative. This short film echoes the concerns of #Resistance150 and other Indigenous responses to Canada 150 that defy the notion that a

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – June 26, 2017 (4 of 4)

nation began on this territory in 1867. (As we know, the history of inhabitants on the land called Canada stretches back much further in time.) The film features a landmark case in which the people of the Ktunaxa Nation bring to court a challenge against the appropriation of their sacred land for a proposed ski resort. The film has echoes of Alanis Obomsawin's *Kanehsatake* as it depicts the white majority's utter failure to be sensitive to the rights, traditions, and histories of the Indigenous inhabitants of the land. As *Last Resort* shows the first case in which an Indigenous land claim case stands on grounds of religious belief, the litigation asks us to protect Indigenous beliefs and culture with the same care to which rights extend for all non-Indigenous Canadians. Belik's film tackles a central problem (if not the central problem) to the Canadian ethos, which is the settler mentality that struggles to adapt to the needs, rights, and land claims of the original inhabitants of the land. Strikingly shot landscapes evoke the power and beauty of the territory that the Ktunaxa strive to protect, while the characters give the film an intimate yet epic scope that puts Canada's ongoing insensitivity to Indigenous communities on trial.

In the Name of All Canadians connects these short films with segments of a sixth doc, *In Part*, directed by Khoa Lê. These fragments offer interviews with Canadians from all backgrounds: Francophone, Anglophone, black, white, Asian, Indigenous, young, old, straight, gay, transgender, etc. (The latter gets a strong presence from *Those Who Make Revolution Halfway Only Dig Their Own Graves* star Gabrielle Tremblay.) The interviewees answer a series of questions, which offer a range of responses that reflect the complexity of the nation and the lack of a singular Canadian identity. Cut across the other stories, the puzzle pieces of this film come together to create a mosaic: a nation of distinct parts that make a whole.

In the Name of All Canadians does away with the navel-gazing, backslapping, and self-congratulation of Canada 150 to force the next part of the national conversation. A century and a half is a major birthday and the milestone invites collective self-reflection.

In the Name of All Canadians premieres at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Wednesday, June 28 with a theatrical run beginning June 30. Follow the POV blog for updates on additional screenings.

The Globe and Mail – June 26, 2017

Review: In the Name of All Canadians is both engaging and difficult to watch



Patrick Reed and Andrea Schmidt's contribution, *Notwithstanding*, imagines the potential casualties of the Charter's now rarely discussed clause.

LAURA HAGGLUND/GLOBE AND MAIL UPDATE

BARRY HERTZ

PUBLISHED JUNE 26, 2017 UPDATED JUNE 26, 2017

TITLE

In the Name of All Canadians

DIRECTED BY

Vivian Belik, Jennifer Bowen, Karen Chapman, Aisha Jamal, Khoa Lê, Annick Marion, Ariel Nasr, Patrick Reed, Andréa Schmidt, and Janelle and Jérémie Wookey

COUNTRY

USA

LANGUAGE

English

Confederation's 150th birthday has sparked genuine reflection from some corners, empty-headed myth-building from others (hello, CBC's *Canada: The Story of Us*). Fortunately, *In the Name of All Canadians* is firmly in the former category, an impressively curated selection of six short documentaries that take a serious, sometimes heartbreaking look at this country we call home, specifically the country that has existed since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has taken hold. A standout is Patrick Reed and Andrea Schmidt's contribution, *Notwithstanding*, which imagines the potential casualties of the Charter's now rarely discussed clause.

Commissioned by Hot Docs and produced with courage and compassion by Toronto filmmaker Dan Montgomery (*Tower*, *How Heavy This Hammer*), the film is both engaging and difficult to watch, its directors never coming to any pat thesis on what, exactly, Canada is today. As it should be – 150 years in, one person's Canada is not the same as another's.

In the Name of All Canadians opens June 28 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, followed by screenings at cinemas across the country.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/film-reviews/review-in-the-name-of-all-canadians-is-both-engaging-and-difficult-to-watch/article35465339/>

IN THE NAME OF ALL CANADIANS & CANADA IN A DAY

JUNE 27, 2017 ADDISON WYLIE 0 COMMENTS



FILED UNDER REVIEWS

Canada turns 150-years-old on Saturday, July 1, and film aficionados have been given two homegrown films to anticipate this historic birthday.

In the Name of All Canadians is an anthology of six documentaries exclusively commissioned by Hot Docs featuring work by Ariel Nasr (*The Boxing Girls of Kabul*), Patrick Reed (*Guantanamo's Child: Omar Khadr*) and a list of other competent documentarians. This collection of films in this multi-thematic experiment is heavy and unavoidable; considering a couple of the topics include racial profiling and the mistreatment towards Indigenous people. However, *In the Name of All Canadians* maintains a consistent and special personal connection throughout the individual runtimes of each film. Topics are explored effectively, while bite-size transitional street interviews break up the mood with cute humour.

In the Name of All Canadians screens in Toronto days after the television premiere of *Canada In A Day*, the next chapter in a worldwide series co-produced by Ridley Scott (*Alien*, *The Martian*). Just as audiences observed in 2011's groundbreaking *Life In A Day* and last year's barely-released lightweight *India in a Day*, *Canada In A Day* projects an intimate narrative assembled from thousands of well-shot videos taking place on September 10, 2016. Audiences watch various routines and surprises from the wee hours of the morning (late-night festivities carried over from the night before and other morning rituals), to mid-day excitement (a cycling

Wylie Writes – June 27, 2017 (2 of 2)

trip, meeting a lover's parents for the first time), to the final minutes before midnight (a vigil for a miscarriage). *Canada In A Day* is a success by using overlapping discussions to bounce around the country's beautiful scenery while bringing a diverse country together. Choosing this mindful structure develops the film into something more than an extended selfie.

These two honourable films are good, but they serve separate purposes: *Canada In A Day* celebrates the unity and beauty of this country, while *In the Name of All Canadians* provides viewers with reflections and goals for the next 150 years.

National Post – June 27, 2017

In the Name of All Canadians deserves credit for good intentions

Commissioned by the Hot Docs organization, these short documentaries all take as their jumping-off point the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms



Chris Knight

June 27, 2017

3:06 PM EDT

Anthologies are, by their nature, uneven and sometimes rickety. But *In the Name of All Canadians* deserves credit for good intentions. Commissioned by the Hot Docs organization, these short documentaries all take as their jumping-off point the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There are five; six if you count the interstitial bits in which Canadians riff on their favourite food or choose from “belief or doubt,” “stay or leave,” etc.

The first, *L’inspecteur*, describes how French communities fought back against Manitoba’s Thornton Act of 1916, which forbade French-language education; something a federal Charter might have prevented. Others look at the case of Abousfian Abdelrazik, a Sudanese-born Canadian locked out of the country after being declared a terrorist (he’s not); a First Nations fight against a B.C. ski resort planned to be built on sacred land; and a man discussing how you can invoke your rights in court, but not when a cop pulls you over on the road or the sidewalk because you’re black.

Least effective is *Notwithstanding*, which speculates on possible uses of the Notwithstanding Clause by the federal government. But even here the message is clear; we may have a Charter, but it’s a living document that requires constant vigilance and even citizen action to keep it strong.

<http://nationalpost.com/entertainment/movies/in-the-name-of-all-canadians-deserves-credit-for-good-intentions/wcm/17ca0a4c-a0d7-4db5-b997-d6b2e3339246>

Thirty Four Flavours – June 28, 2017

Hot Docs' Premieres 'In the Name of All Canadians'- June 28 , 2017 (Hot Docs Cinema)

Hot Docs' 'In the Name of All Canadians', a film the organization commissioned to commemorate Canada 150, will have its world premiere at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Wednesday, June 28, 2017. The film will then screen at the Cinema starting on June 30 for a limited engagement, followed by special screenings at partner festivals and cinemas throughout the country.

Thoughtful and compelling, the film is a compilation of six short documentaries, each looking at a story that has been impacted by a right listed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a document that in its short 35 years has helped shape the country.

From Indigenous rights to the controversial 'notwithstanding clause,' discover Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms through six short documentaries commissioned by Hot Docs. Participating filmmakers take the Charter's key tenets off the page and into the lived experiences of the country we call home.

In the midst of Canada 150 celebrations this weekend, I would encourage you to immerse yourself in this formidable documentary. Not only is it deeply emotional, but timely. It is riddled with the quest for freedom, mind blowing injustices and the colours and textures that we all share as Canadians. We may come from different places, have been raised with different values and traditions; yet we carry the same truths, desire for equality and joie de vivre. 'In the Name of All Canadians' needs to be viewed by all Canadians this long weekend.

World premiere June 28, 2017 at the Hot Docs Cinema.

<https://thirtyfourflavours.wordpress.com/2017/06/27/hot-docs-premieres-in-the-name-of-all-canadians-june-28-2017-hot-docs-cinema/>

In The Name Of All Canadians isn't short on content

Doc anthology marking Canada 150 is uneven, but it's worth it for Karen Chapman's powerful *Lessons Injustice*

by Norman Wilner

June 28, 2017 3:28 PM

IN THE NAME OF ALL CANADIANS (Ariel Nasr & Aisha Jamal, Patrick Reed & Andréa Schmidt, Karen Chapman, Khoa Lê, Jérémie Wookey & Annick Marion, Vivian Belik & Jennifer Bowen-Allen). 88 minutes. Some subtitles. Opens Friday (June 30). See listing. Rating: NNN
In The Name Of All Canadians compiles six documentary shorts commissioned by Hot Docs to mark Canada's 150th birthday.

Creative producer Dan Montgomery (*Tower*, *How Heavy This Hammer*) has said that his aim was to explore the legacy of colonialism and tensions that are the result of Confederation – and you can feel some of the filmmakers straining under the weight of that responsibility, making sure we understand the importance of the themes of cultural respect or legal jeopardies being examined.

Patrick Reed and Andréa Schmidt's *Notwithstanding* offers scary music and dramatic readings of the testimonies of Canadians who've had their civil rights suspended by an overreaching government, while Vivian Belik's *Last Resort* is a long, dry look at a the Ktunaxa- Nation's legal challenge to developers trying to build a ski lodge on sacred land. But when the focus is on citizens rather than institutions, the project produces something genuinely powerful.

Jérémie Wookey and Annick Marion's *L'Inspecteur*, which opens the anthology, uses inventive hand-drawn animation to tell the story of kids learning French in secret in Manitoba after it had been outlawed as a subject in public schools.

Aisha Jamal and Ariel Nasr's *The Long Way Home* tells the story of Abousfian Abdelrazik, a Montreal man who went home to Sudan to visit his family and spent three years in prison there, only to find Canada unwilling to repatriate him after his release. It's a grim illustration of the Harper government's refusal to help a Canadian in trouble.

The final segment, Karen Chapman's *Lessons Injustice*, matches banal footage of streets and highways to the voice-over of a Black man worrying about his child's future in a country that's become increasingly dangerous for both of them. Chapman makes her argument almost invisibly, ending on a simple image that's absolutely devastating.

Not every piece in *In The Name Of All Canadians* is as strong – and Khoa Lê's interstitial interview segments feel a little pointless – but *Lessons Injustice* makes the whole thing worth it.

Hot Docs presents In the Name of All Canadians



In the Name of All Canadians is a documentary film comprised of six short documentary films which are inspired by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, one part of the Canadian constitution. The six documentaries are: *IN PART* directed by Khoa Lê, *L'inspecteur* directed by Jérémie Wookey and Annick Marion, *The Long Way Home* directed by Aisha Jamal and Ariel Nasr, *Notwithstanding* directed by Patrick Reed and Andréa Schmidt, *Last Resort* directed by Vivian Belik, and *Lessons Injustice* directed by Karen Chapman. The filmmakers and/or teams of filmmakers have focussed on a specific aspect of the charter to explore, examine and shine a light on how it resonates in the stories of Canadians. Hot Docs, North America's largest documentary film festival, commissioned the film.

IN PART celebrates Canada's diversity, rich multicultural heritage and official languages, and serves as book ends to the other documentary films. It is an UPLIFTING film.

L'inspecteur is an important lesson in protecting minority language education rights and chronicles the story of Franco-Manitobans who found themselves outside the law in order to protect their language and culture as French Canadians.



The Long Way Home is a dark tale of what happened to Canadian Abousfian Abdelrazik who was falsely labelled and accused of being a terrorist.

Notwithstanding is a speculative interpretation of the notwithstanding clause of the Canadian Constitution and is based on real accounts of people's experiences. They include Muslims in Canada Facing Discrimination, G20 Detainees, Japanese Canadian Internees, and Prisoners in Solitary Confinement. The notwithstanding clause allows the federal government or a provincial

legislature to enact legislation to override several sections of the charter that deal with fundamental freedoms, legal rights and equality rights.

The Extra Mile – June 28, 2017 (2 of 2)



Last Resort is a compelling documentary about indigenous rights, experiences and aboriginal spirituality. The documentary focusses on British Columbia's Ktunaxa First Nation's legal case before the Supreme Court of Canada on having aboriginal spirituality recognised into the Charter's Right of Religious Freedom. Plans are afoot to build a ski resort on Jumbo Mountain, Qat'muk to the Ktunaxa First Nation, which is home to the Grizzly Bear Spirit, a powerful and important figure in Ktunaxa spirituality.



Lessons Injustice is a thought provoking documentary that exemplifies the gap between charter rights Sections 8, 9 and 15 and the reality on the streets for men like Danardo Jones.

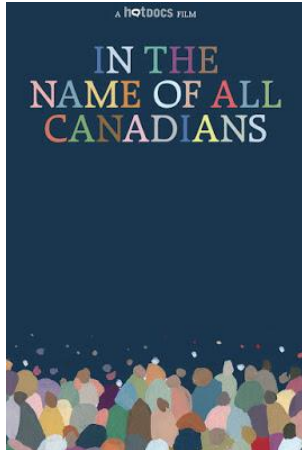
The documentary resonates and has resonated with me on many levels and invites societal reflection. The gap between the principles and lofty vision of the charter of rights and freedoms and reality is disturbing. It brings into question what confidence can we have in our charter rights and freedoms when they are failing to protect minorities and Canada's indigenous peoples. When you think of it, to mount a charter challenge is beyond the means of the vast majority of Canadians. Should we be celebrating Canada's sesquicentennial birthday when so many Canadians are denied their rights and freedoms? It's a complicated question because there is much to celebrate with recently made inroads with Canada's medically assisted dying and same-sex marriage legislation. The charter made it possible to argue the same-sex marriage and medically assisted dying cases.

The documentary has tremendous educational appeal, can serve as a primer into our charter rights and freedoms, and will no doubt spark meaningful dialogue and debate, and social action. I highly recommend it!

Hot Docs releases In the Name of All Canadians at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on June 30 for a limited engagement.

<http://thextramileca.com/2017/06/29/hot-docs-presents-in-the-name-of-all-canadians/>

Review: In the Name of All Canadians



Presented by Hot Docs, in commemoration of Canada's 150th anniversary and the 35th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, *In the Name of All Canadians* is a compilation of six short documentaries, each focused on a different aspect of the charter.

In Part (Khoa Lê) features a wide variety of Canadians being asked a series of questions. *L'inspecteur* (Jérémie Wookey, Janelle Wookey and Annick Marion) sees a number of people recalling the time when it was forbidden to teach French in Manitoba. *Long Way Home* (Ariel Nasr and Aisha Jamal) tells the story of Abousfian Abdelrazik, a black Muslim man, who found himself imprisoned in Sudan for years without being charged. *Notwithstanding* (Patrick Reed and Andréa Schmidt) presents a number of scenarios, where the Charter's notwithstanding clause can be used to the detriment of other rights. *Last Resort* (Vivian Belik and Jennifer Bowen-Allen) follows the efforts of the Ktunaxa Nation in B.C. to prevent development of a ski resort on the sacred glacier Qat'muk. Finally, *Lessons Injustice* (Karen Chapman) has a black father pondering how he will tell his son that his rights will likely be violated by authorities, just because of the colour of his skin.

Commissioned by Hot Docs and Creative Producer Dan Montgomery, *In the Name of All Canadians* features six short documentaries that all deal with various elements of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which was created in 1982 and embedded within the Canadian Constitution. A recurring theme within these six documentaries is the rights detailed in the charter can often be misinterpreted or ignored, especially when it involves minority groups.

The segment *In Part* acts as a framing device for this collection, as various Canadians of all types give their answers to a series of questions, ranging from favourite language, colour, or whether they choose rights or freedoms. While the other segments of *In the Name of All Canadians* have a somewhat more serious tone to them, *In Part* is very colourful, upbeat, and almost hip. This does result in a bit of a clash with the rest of the collection, though *In Part* still works fine as a framing device.

Sean Kelly on Movies – June 28, 2017 (2 of 2)

L'inspecteur reminisces about the Thornton Act, which was passed in Manitoba in 1916, removing the bilingual school system. This segment focuses on the efforts of those who tried to protect the French language and the hide the fact that French continued to be taught from the anglophone inspectors. This segment features animated recreations of the events being recollected and is also very enlightening about a time when the French language was in danger in Canada, long before it was declared an official language and protected in the charter. The story of Abousfian Abdelrazik, told in the segment *Long Way Home* is not one that you would usually associate with Canada. In this case, Abdelrazik was arrested in Sudan, after travelling there to visit his ailing mother, and jailed for three years without being charged. He was then subsequently placed on a terrorist blacklist and refused reentry into Canada. *Long Way Home* is a scary tale of someone getting their rights violated, because of their race and religion, but it is also a hopeful one, since Abousfian Abdelrazik gained many supporters back in Canada.

Notwithstanding uses actors to narrate a series of true accounts and give speculative scenarios how the charter's notwithstanding clause can possibly be used under extreme circumstances to remove other rights from individuals. This segment deals with some very real issues right now, such as Islamic practices and the right to peaceful protest, both of which can be taken away using the notwithstanding clause. This definitely creates a scary scenario.

Last Resort covers the first ever Indigenous freedom of religion challenge to be brought before the Supreme Court. In this case, the Ktunaxa Nation are fighting against the development of a ski resort on Jumbo Mountain in B.C., which is known as Qat'muk to the Ktunaxa and is considered a very sacred location. *Last Resort* raises questions about whether or not Canada is willing to act on all the talk about reconciliation with the First Nations community and how this Supreme Court ruling will say a lot about future relations.

The final segment *Lessons Injustice* deals with a very sad truth: Rights don't protect black people on the street. This entire segment consists of narration by a black father, shown driving in a car with his 16 year old son, who is contemplating how he is going to tell his son about the inherently racist world that they live in. With the rise of the Black Live Matter movement in recent years, *Lessons Injustice* reiterates how black people remain a subject the prejudice and that the rights declared in the charter have never saved anybody on the street. While this is arguably a common known fact, it doesn't make it any less tragic, especially since white parents never will have to have such conversations with their kids.

Despite the somewhat jarring tone found in the framing segment, *In the Name of All Canadians* is still a very interesting exploration into the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, with the film making you think about what more should be done in this country to protect the rights of people of all types.

★★★★★ LIKED IT

Remembering Jonathan Demme at Hot Docs with ‘The Documentaries of Demme (+1): A Tribute’

By: **Admin** | Posted on June 29, 2017



Hot Docs / Paramount Classics

From June 30 to July 19, 2017, Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema will be paying tribute to the great filmmaker Jonathan Demme, who passed away on April 16, 2017. While Demme may be most well-known for directing the Academy Award winning, *The Silence of the Lambs*, **The Documentaries of Demme (+1): A Tribute** aims to highlight his spirit through his many documentaries.

“Jonathan Demme may be well known for his major Hollywood films, but we wanted to shine a spotlight on his remarkable documentaries,” says Adam Cook, programmer of the Jonathan Demme series at Hot Docs. “Whether it’s his inventive approach to capturing performances in films like *Stop Making Sense* and *Swimming to Cambodia*, or his admiration for social justice advocates in films like *The Agronomist* and *Cousin Bobby*, Demme always brought a curious eye and a distinctly human touch. It’s the work he cited as being most proud of, and we’re excited to pay tribute to one of the great American filmmakers and documentarians by sharing some of his, and our, favourites.”

Special guests including journalists, musicians, and other artists will introduce films and participate in post-screening discussions. Tickets for **The Documentaries of Demme (+1): A Tribute** are available for purchase at the Hot Docs box office or online at www.hotdocscinema.ca.

Full Programme:

COUSIN BOBBY

Jonathan Demme delivers one of his most personal films with this portrait of his cousin, a controversial minister in Harlem working with the civil rights movement.

Introduced by local film critic Tina Hassannia, contributor to National Post, The Globe and Mail, RogerEbert.com, CBC Arts and Village Voice.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 9:00 PM

Get Reel Movies – June 29, 2017 (2 of 3)

NEIL YOUNG: HEART OF GOLD

Join us on Canada Day for one of Neil Young's most memorable performances caught on film culled from two emotionally charged concerts at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium.

SATURDAY, JULY 1, 6:15 PM

JIMMY CARTER MAN FROM PLAINS

Jimmy Carter criss-crosses the country advocating for peace in this endearing portrait filmed during the book tour for his controversial book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*.

SUNDAY, JULY 2, 8:00 PM

SWIMMING TO CAMBODIA

Master monologist Spalding Gray delivers one of his most entertaining pieces with this humorous series of musings on his experience working on a Hollywood movie shot in Thailand.

Actor, playwright and director Daniel MacIvor, who wrote and starred in *Who Killed Spalding Gray?* which ran in Toronto this past winter, joins us for a post-screening discussion.

MONDAY, JULY 3, 6:30 PM

STOREFRONT HITCHCOCK

British pop singer-songwriter Robyn Hitchcock is at the top of his game in this inventive collaboration with Demme, featuring an always shifting storefront background.

Film subject Robyn Hitchcock joins us via Skype for a special introduction and post-screening discussion.

TUESDAY, JULY 4, 8:45 PM

Get Reel Movies – June 29, 2017 (3 of 3)

SOMETHING WILD

There simply might not be another movie like *Something Wild*, Jonathan Demme's infectious and energetic screwball odyssey that became a cult hit.

This screening will be introduced by Calum Marsh, arts and culture reporter for National Post.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 8:45 PM

HE AGRONOMIST

Something of a modern-day folk hero, Jean Dominique founded Haiti's first independent radio station and spoke truth to power, inspiring his fellow people for decades.

THURSDAY, JULY 6, 3:30 PM

STOP MAKING SENSE

The Talking Heads deliver a full blast, high-energy performance in the greatest concert doc of all time. Screening alongside cinemas across the U.S. and Canada on July 19 in a salute to Jonathan Demme.

This screening will be introduced by Chandler Levack, a Juno-nominated music video director, journalist and digital editor and staff writer for TIFF.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 8:45 PM

Purchase your tickets at the Hot Docs box office or online at www.hotdocscinema.ca.

<https://getreelmovies.com/remembering-jonathan-demme-hot-docs-series-documentaries-of-demme-tribute/>

Cate Blanchett, not quite cheaper by the dozen

Director Julian Rosefeldt's *Manifesto* may mark the reintroduction of avant-garde film to the mainstream



In *Manifesto*, Cate Blanchett takes on the personas of 13 different people.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GAT

KATE TAYLOR

PUBLISHED JUNE 29, 2017 UPDATED NOVEMBER 12, 2017

The German artist Julian Rosefeldt grew up in the heyday of the rep house before the rise of the video store and the supremacy of Hollywood banished experimental film to the gallery and the art museum.

As a teenager in Munich in the early 1980s, he was introduced to the work of the surrealist director Luis Bunuel at a local cinematheque and the Spaniard's fractured and dream-like narratives inspire him to this day.

Rosefeldt's recent feature *Manifesto* contains several Bunuelian moments but, better yet, *Manifesto* may mark the reintroduction of avant-garde film to the mainstream.

Rosefeldt's secret weapon in this unplanned artistic assault on the multiplex is a bona fide movie star: Cate Blanchett.

The Globe and Mail – June 29, 2017 (2 of 6)

"Cate is an amazing scientist, a researcher of the human condition," Rosefeldt said in a phone interview from Berlin. "She would bring knowledge and curiosity to everything I proposed."



In one of *Manifesto*'s scenes, Blanchett plays both a news anchor and a correspondent in conversation with each other.

What Rosefeldt proposed, ultimately, was a 13-channel art-gallery video installation and a parallel feature film in which Blanchett plays 13 different characters in 12 different scenes all reciting passages from artistic and political manifestos of the 20th century.

Some of these are highly ironic: a news anchor interviews a correspondent (both played by Blanchett) about conceptual art – and fakery. Some are funny: a grade school teacher lectures her young charges about how to make art and film. Some are pointed: a widow at a graveside spouts Dada, denouncing society to the grieving circle around her.

Manifesto began with a chance encounter at a Berlin gallery opening in 2010 where Blanchett was introduced to Rosefeldt and his work; they started chatting and soon agreed to a collaboration, although it wasn't clear at first what such a project would be.

The much-acclaimed Blanchett had recently starred as Elizabeth I for the second time in her career and, perhaps more to the point, had played one version of Bob Dylan in Todd Haynes's experimental film portrait *I'm Not There*.

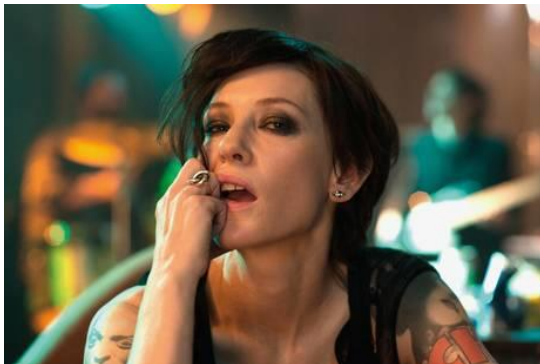
Rosefeldt, meanwhile, was in the midst of research for *Deep Gold*, his 19-minute 2013 tribute to Bunuel's *L'Age d'Or*, the 1930 comedy that mocked bourgeois sexual conventions in scenes of lust, repression and release. For his tribute, which he describes as "overwriting" or a piece that could be inserted into the original, Rosefeldt created a world of Weimar debauchery in which a

The Globe and Mail – June 29, 2017 (3 of 6)

cabaret singer intones the 1913 text, Futurist Manifesto of Lust, by Valentine de Saint-Point, a member of the Italian Futurist movement that celebrated technology and speed, but also a feminist critic of it.

"They have incredible powerful feminist statements in them," Rosefeldt says of this manifesto and its predecessor, Manifesto of Futurist Woman. "But they also have the terrible fascist ideas, like all the Futurist texts. It's bizarre."

And so, Rosefeldt had begun reading manifestos – from Futurism's utopian paeans that seemed to foreshadow the violence of the First World War to the call for a pure, non-commercial cinema issued by the Danish film movement Dogme in 1995.



Manifesto's 12 scenes feature Blanchett reciting passages from artistic and political manifestos of the 20th century.

In their speechifying, the manifestos struck him as performance pieces rather than texts that were meant to be read, and if they can seem menacing in their extreme pronouncements and puritanical proposals, Rosefeldt has deep sympathy for the place from which they spring: they were often written early in careers that had yet to become celebrated.

"You don't see them as something written by a very famous artist who created that work at the MOMA [Museum of Modern Art], but as a text written by an insecure and fragile teenager or early 20s who is seeking independence and doesn't really know what to do with himself or herself.

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"This youthful rage seems so loud and angry, but at the same time it's immature. It's as though these people are not screaming outside, 'I want to change the world!' but rather inside, 'Who am I? Who would I like to be?'"

In that regard, the chameleon Blanchett seems perfectly suited for the job, as she plays a homeless man raging at the sky, a technician in a scrapyard speechifying about architecture as she operates the machinery or an imperious Russian choreographer addressing a bizarrely costumed corps de ballet, each time presenting herself as an entirely different persona. "We invented something only she could do," Rosefeldt says.



Director Julian Rosefeldt says manifestos struck him as performance pieces rather than texts meant to be read.

And they invented it in amazingly short order: after months of long-distance discussions matching characters and texts, and a two-day meeting in New York to agree on the tone for each scene, shooting took place in 12 days in Berlin: Blanchett averaged a character per day of shooting.

"She is amazing," Rosefeldt said. "I don't think you could ask that of very many actors."

Sometimes, the results pair the texts (which are often an amalgamation of various manifestos) with the setting: the Futurists' celebration of high-speed machinery is recited by a day-trader in the midst of a vast, computerized stock exchange.

More often, the point is the disconnection: a conservative housewife assembles her family around the dining room table and recites Claes Oldenburg's I am for an Art ... As they pass the vegetables and carve the chicken, her children and husband sometimes sigh or hesitate, as

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though mum were telling that old story again – not as though she was breaking the bounds of convention and threatening to upend their daily lives by turning it all into a work of art.

The scene vividly recalls the logical disjunctions of the surrealists and wouldn't feel out of place in Bunuel's later films. In the best surrealist tradition, Rosefeldt points out that our own dreams prove action and dialogue don't always need to line up to have meaning.



One of Manifesto's scenes features Blanchett playing a homeless man "raging at the sky."

"I believe in the subconscious and experimental ways of thinking," Rosefeldt said. "In my work, things don't necessarily make sense. I don't really know exactly why the Fluxus manifesto [recited by the choreographer] has to be combined with dance, but it makes you perceive the text in a different way."

If that suggests Rosefeldt works instinctively, it's also a purposeful practice: Manifesto was shot in a dozen Berlin locations, mainly scouted by the artist himself, whose mysterious origins and puzzling purposes destabilize the viewer: the trading floor is located in a building of dazzling scale; the homeless tramp inhabits some post-industrial wasteland; the housewife's house is oddly retro.

"In narrative cinema, the location announces what is going to happen; a dark street will announce a crime. I don't like to do that. You want to know what will happen in these [locations]; it will make you more curious and open-minded."

The filmmaker has little good to say about today's "banal" commercial cinema in which image, text, action, location and sound all line up to make the same point, but for Manifesto he has borrowed one important strategy from Hollywood: a celebrity who will bring extra attention to the project.



Manifesto began with a chance encounter at a Berlin gallery opening in 2010 where Blanchett was introduced to Rosefeldt.

He knew there might be doubters in the art world who questioned Blanchett's presence but, on the other side, the scale of the benefits actually surprised him. It turned out that this collaboration, which had come about by chance, represented a great opportunity to break out of the elite fine-art context where he suspects that artists are often preaching to the converted.

"The black box of the movie theatre is probably a more democratic space than the white cube of the art context," he suggests. "If you don't have a certain degree of education you don't get the idea of visiting a museum on a Sunday afternoon ... while in the movies, you might just go and say, 'It's a film with Cate Blanchett, let's check it out.'"

Check it out, by all means. Blanchett fans may be surprised.

Manifesto opens June 30 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in Toronto, and July 7 at Cinema du Parc in Montreal.

Hot Docs celebrates Canada's 150th birthday with series of shorts

By Meagan Kashty

June 29, 2017



Toronto-based film festival Hot Docs commemorated Canada's 150th birthday on July 1 with the world premiere of ***In the Name of All Canadians*** — a compilation of six short docs inspired by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Participating filmmakers chose a specific aspect of the Charter to explore, such as indigenous rights, multiculturalism or the notwithstanding clause, and were tasked with exploring how these themes resonate in the stories of their fellow Canadians.

The project was the brain child of **Elizabeth Radshaw**, Hot Docs' industry programs director and executive producer of the film.

Two years ago, Radshaw was studying for her Canadian citizenship test, leading her to learn more about the Charter — a bill of rights that is part of the Canadian Constitution, which sets basic laws about how the country operates.

"I realized it's a unique and special document — one that the everyday Canadian doesn't think about because when it works, it works behind the scenes," she said. Radshaw and the Hot Docs team worked together to conceive of the idea to tell stories about the Charter and bring an emotional face to something usually associated with high school history class.

Realscreen – June 29, 2017 (2 of 3)

Brett Hendrie, Hot Docs executive director, said that as a national and year-round cultural organization, he felt it was important for Hot Docs to contribute to the conversation and dialogue around the centennial.

“We feel documentary film has a particular alignment with Canada that’s important,” he said.

In September, Dan Montgomery was called up to sign on as creative producer of the film.

“Immediately I knew that we were going to have to bring on other talent and people to realize this project,” he said. “So the first steps involved sketching out how we were going to compile a series of short films around the subject matter.”

The team first considered doing an open call for submissions, but quickly realized that it wouldn’t be possible process the project under tight time restraints. Instead, they crafted a wish list of possible filmmakers and reached out to them to gauge their interest and availability. After all, it takes a lot of work to produce six films in less than nine months.

Participating filmmakers include: **Ariel Nasr** (***The Boxing Girls of Kabul***) and Aisha Jamal; **Patrick Reed** (***Guantanamo’s Child: Omar Khadr***) and Andréa Schmidt; **Karen Chapman** (***Walk Good***); Jean-François Caissy (***La marche à suivre***); **Janelle** and Jérémie Wookey (***A Right to Eat***); **Vivian Belik** and Jennifer Bowen-Allen.

Hendrie said the team had discussed a few different ideas, but settled on the compilation of shorts because it gave Hot Docs the opportunity to amplify the filmmakers’ voices as opposed to the organization’s, and enabled them to showcase the work of directors from coast to coast with a variety of backgrounds, each who could bring something valuable to the conversation.

Radshaw said she hopes these films help open up a dialogue between Canadians, and addresses their relationship with the government.

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“There’s a lot going on for Canada Day and it’s easy to get lost in the flood and flurry of activity,” she said. “It was a big reason why we chose this subject matter, because we knew it would be a bit more evergreen.”

Following the June 28 world premiere, *In the Name of All Canadians* will screen at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema beginning on June 30. Hot Docs also plans to leverage its theatrical, education and online distribution partnerships and programs to share the project with audiences across the country through partner festivals and community screenings. It will be further made available online, joining the Hot Docs Collection on iTunes.

In the fall, the compilation and accompanying educational resources will be available to reaches as part of the Docs For Schools, Hot Docs’ education program that offers over 95,000 students free access to documentaries each year.

The project was partially funded by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Inside Hot Docs' ambitious anthology 'In the Name of All Canadians'

Andrew Parker June 29, 2017 2:00 pm



Canada's 150th birthday is a cause for many to celebrate what makes the country such a great place to live, but it should also be used as a time to reflect on what citizens can do to make Canada a better, more equitable place for all its citizens. To that end and just in time for the Canada Day long weekend, the Hot Docs organization has delivered their most ambitious and unique in-house project to date: the anthology documentary *In the Name of All Canadians* (which made its World Premiere at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema this past Wednesday and opens properly at the theatre on Friday the 30th), a series of five short films and a wrap-around segment that brings to light issues, controversies, and important to remember past precedents surrounding the rocky history and implementation of the 35 year old Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

While Hot Docs has garnered a reputation as one of the biggest supporters of documentary filmmaking in the world – granting monetary assistance to any number of non-fiction endeavours from Canada and around the world – *In the Name of All Canadians* marks the first time the organization has commissioned filmmakers expressly for a specific project.

"Like many cultural organizations across the country, we had the sesquicentennial on our radar, so we asked ourselves the question 'how can we be meaningfully be a part of the conversation and celebrations that are happening this year,'" Hot Docs Executive Director Brett Hendrie said about the genesis of *In the Name of All Canadians* during a telephone interview last week. "We had a lot of different ideas that we bounced against the wall, and one of the ideas that resonated the most with us was actually commissioning filmmakers to give them a chance to add their own voices and perspectives to the 150th milieu this year. There are a lot of amazing events this year across the country, but we wanted to give a documentary context to our event by commissioning filmmakers to create milestone films."

"From there, we wondered how we could bind these together with something a bit more penetrating than just placing these films under the banner of Canadiana and to give the filmmakers more freedom to explore their own ideas and perspectives within this thread that links them. We thought and decided that the Charter was a good area to focus in on because it's really relevant to national identity and it's something that people are very aware of on a general level, but maybe not as much in the specifics of it as seen in the stories depicted by the filmmakers here. These are films about how the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has impacted real people in very different ways. We see this first as a way

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that Hot Docs continues to support filmmakers to tell their stories, and we're happy about that, but as a cultural organization, this is also how we thought we could most meaningfully contribute to the ongoing conversations this year."

Linked together by filmmaker Khoa Lê's *In Part* – interstitials where everyday English and French speaking Canadians of various background, ages, and races are asked questions pertaining to their daily lives and opinions based around the famous Proust Questionnaire – the five short films that comprise *In the Name of All Canadians* take vastly different documentary approaches to bring current and historical issues surrounding the charter to light.

"For this project, which is a commission and different than other ways we have supported Canadian documentary filmmaking before, we reached out to filmmakers that we had a knowledge of either through our granting programs, having screened their films at the festival in the past, or things like our labs, training programs, or pitching forums, and we really wanted to make sure we were reaching out to filmmakers who had the talent and vision for a project like this," Hendrie begins when talking about the selection process for the shorts that would comprise *In the Name of All Canadians*, which had a brief, partial sneak peek at the Hot Docs festival this past spring. "Also, because this is an anthology of short films, we wanted to make sure that we were reaching out to filmmakers who were representative of the diversity of the country and the diversity of talent that we have. We have filmmakers from all over the country participating in this. We had conversations with the filmmakers to talk about their interest in joining this project and talking about what their approach would be, keeping in mind that they had full latitude with their films, but making sure that we had films that would synchronize well with each other."



L'Inspecteur

The animated *L'Inspecteur*, created by Jérémie Wooke, Janelle Wooke, and Annick Marion, blends stunning hand crafted black and white illustrations with firsthand accounts of proud French speaking Canadians growing up in Manitoba during the 1930s and 40s, a time when English was exclusively to be taught in schools and such teachings were to be enforced by Anglophone officials.

Aisha Jamal and Ariel Nasr's *The Long Way Home* tells the frustrating and incendiary personal trials of Sudanese-Canadian Abousifian Abdelrazik, who despite being a Canadian citizen and having family back home in Montreal, was detained without just cause by Sudanese intelligence officers and CSIS for several years and placed on a terrorist watch-list after returning to Africa to spend time with his ailing mother.

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Notwithstanding, from the team of Patrick Reed and Andréa Schmidt, blends reality and fiction to take a look at the controversial 33rd section of the Charter and Rights and Freedoms: the infamously malleable “notwithstanding clause,” which states that parliament and provincial governments can circumvent certain aspects of the charter should they deem it necessary. For *Notwithstanding*, Reed and Schmidt take real narratives of Canadian human rights violations at various historical points and recreate these moments word for word using actors as stand-in talking heads.

Vivian Belik and Jennifer Bowen-Allen’s *Last Resort* takes viewers to the lands of the Ktunaxa Nation just outside of Victoria, BC where privileged plans to build an ill advised ski resort atop a glacier have been simmering and boiling over in the courts for years. Jumbo Mountain, the land in question, isn’t just an ecological hub worth preserving, but also home to Qat’muk, or the Grizzly Bear Spirit for the Ktunaxa. Not only does this case mark the first time the Canadian Supreme Court has heard a case that calls into question the link between religious freedom and the possession of land, but also calls into question how the “reconciliation” part of “truth and reconciliation” is often treated as a noun when it should be treated as a verb.



Lessons Injustice

Karen Chapman’s powerful and heartfelt *Lessons Injustice* listens as underprivileged black teenager turned high profile lawyer Danardo Jones talks about what kind of future his teenage son is looking forward to. Jones pleads with the viewer to never take the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for granted and to always stand up for their rights, but makes it known that in times of trouble and accusation – particularly if you’re a minority – that those rights can’t be invoked until defendants are put into a court of law, and often too late. It’s a sprawling treatise on the nature of national identity and respecting the rights and freedoms that unite the country, but it also allows Hot Docs to show that it’s not just an Ontario based organization known for screening documentaries at their spring festival or year-round at The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in Toronto.

“The Charter is a national issue tied to our identity, and bringing to light these kinds of issues has always been our M.O.,” Hendrie says when talking about how it was important to the organization to make sure that *In the Name of All Canadians* told stories from across the country. “In supporting the industry, we try to make sure that we have things covered from coast to coast. At last year’s festival, we had delegations from all over the country, and we always go out to these provinces to do these sort of ‘boot camps’ with filmmakers and reach out to wherever we can make a difference. With this project and in addition to the

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premiere at our cinema, we're working with partners to set up screenings all through the country. Secondary to the stories contained in the films, we hope this is an opportunity for us to build awareness among our public audiences about how we support Canadian filmmakers. The Canadian documentary industry is already well aware of the initiatives we have, but we're always trying to find new ways for the public to be aware of the process of making Canadian documentary films, and it's important for audiences to know about and understand when talking about mechanisms for support within the community and talking about how these kinds of films get made."

The project, which was approximately two years in the making from inception and funding to completion by Hendrie's estimate, brought together different creative sensibilities and visions in a hands-off manner under the banner of the Hot Docs organization, and Hendrie hopes that these unique and intertwined documentaries will make viewers across the country look at The Charter of Rights and Freedoms in a new, more informed light.

"Democracy isn't easy, and we have a lot to be proud and thankful for in this country, and I think we have put forth some stories that show some things that we should be proud of, but that also show that things aren't all peaches and cream. The power of documentary is to shine a light on stories that are important, and especially ones that don't normally get the coverage or bandwidth to reach the people who need to hear these stories the most. We should all dig deeper into the stories around us."



The Long Way Home

It might be presumptuous to assume that Hot Docs would produce another project exactly like *In the Name of All Canadians* for the country's bicentennial in fifty years, but with this project under their belt, Hendrie says the organization will return for the time being to their more traditional methods of supporting Canadian documentary filmmaking, but making another anthology like this one isn't entirely out of the question or off the table for the future.

"We really remain committed to our granting programs for filmmakers, which is very different from this because this was a full-on commissioned work, and we're committed to growing the granting programs we already have in place. Growing that is a major priority for us that we're focused the most on. In terms of taking on another commissioned project, I think that's something that we'd happily explore again, but we'll see," Hendrie says with a light chuckle. "Let's see how this one rolls out and what the appetite is for us to do it again."

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In the Name of All Canadians opens for a limited run at The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Friday, June 30, 2017. It can also be seen at The Bookshelf in Guelph, Ontario on July 13, Vancity Theatre in Vancouver on July 11, at the Lunenburg School of the Arts in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia on July 22, at the Gimli Film Festival in Gimli, Manitoba on July 30, and is slated to screen at the upcoming Calgary International Film Festival. To stay up to date on future screenings and for more information on the project, please visit [Hot Docs](#) or [the film's official website](#).

Reel Brief: Mini reviews of *The Beguiled*, *Manifesto*, *Radio Dreams*, *Nowhere to Hide* and *Song to Song* (DVD)

Quick takes on some of this week's new releases.



The Beguiled, starring Nicole Kidman. (BEN ROTHSTEIN / AP)

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic
BRUCE DEMARA Entertainment Reporter
LINDA BARNARD Special to the Star
Thu., June 29, 2017

The Beguiled

Starring Nicole Kidman, Colin Farrell, Kirsten Dunst, Elle Fanning, Oona Laurence and Angourie Rice. Written and directed by Sofia Coppola. Opens Friday at GTA theatres. 94 minutes. **14A**

Sofia Coppola's remake of Don Siegel's 1971 Civil War psychodrama won her the director's prize at Cannes in May, and who are we to argue with the wisdom of the Palme d'Or jury?

Perhaps we might inquire why Coppola's *The Beguiled* didn't instead win for its cinematography or art direction. Redolent of white lace, green moss, filtered sunlight and muted candlelight, it's a great-looking picture, as artfully and moodily conjured as all Coppola's films have been since her 1999 debut *The Virgin Suicides*, whose lead actress Kirsten Dunst co-stars in this new one. The story is briskly told — it's 11 minutes shorter than Siegel's version — with good performances that alternately amuse, seduce and shock.

Extolling Coppola's direction is problematic, though, because she doesn't do much to Siegel's original other than take things away from it. She dropped a slave character from the film ("That's another movie," she told the *Boston Globe*), and excised subtexts of incest and rape that made Siegel's film — and its incongruous male lead Clint Eastwood — seem like art house porn.

Coppola's *The Beguiled* is downright becalmed, even more so with her decision to have wounded Yankee soldier John McBurney, played by Colin Farrell, be a hapless Irish immigrant caught in a war for which he has no quarrel. He's a more sympathetic figure than Eastwood's lecherous deserter.

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The teachers and students cloistered at a Southern girls' school (now located in Virginia rather than Mississippi) are much the same as in Siegel's incarnation, although Coppola emphasizes the gilded-cage feeling — a career trademark — with repeated shots from outside the school's imposing gates.

Nicole Kidman crisply plays headmistress Miss Martha Farnsworth, a Bible-reading patrician who is not afraid of violence (or other extreme measures) and who may be open to lustful temptation.

She's assisted by lovelorn French teacher Edwina (Dunst), who seems afraid to look people in the eye but desires male attention. They have but a handful of students, preteens to late teens, ranging from precocious nature lover Amy (Oona Laurence) to flirty thrill-seeker Alicia (Elle Fanning).

McBurney's presence, first as a badly injured patient needing attention and later as an object of desire and dispute, isn't nearly as disruptive as Eastwood's version was 46 years prior, or as deserving of female vengeance.

Yet *The Beguiled* hits much the same dramatic beats regardless, leaving anyone with a memory of the original film puzzled as to what Coppola was trying to achieve. Darn those pesky comparisons!

Peter Howell

Manifesto

Starring Cate Blanchett. Directed by Julian Rosefeldt. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 94 minutes. **STC**

You may not know much about 20th-century art manifestos, but you'll know what you like with Cate Blanchett's stunning turn as 13 wildly diverse characters who explore them in *Manifesto*.

German visual artist Julian Rosefeldt reimagines his wonkily creative 13-channel film installation into a 90-minute feature, an art film in the purist sense. It won't be for everyone but open minds will be rewarded with a mind-tickling trip carried on engaging visuals and enthralling work from a shape-shifting Blanchett.

The Australian actress has done this type of work before, embodying Bob Dylan in *I'm Not There*. Here, she takes on a whirl of personas, accents and looks, from a homeless man hollering in a Scottish burr through a megaphone to a sneering Russian choreographer lecturing a dance class of *Alien*-inspired chorines on Fluxus.

There's also room for humour, especially Blanchett's suburban American mom reciting Claes Oldenburg's "I Am for an Art ..." as grace while her fidgeting kids and husband wait for a desiccated chicken to be served.

Linda Barnard

Radio Dreams

Starring Mohsen Namjoo, Boshra Dastournezhad. Co-written and directed by Babak Jalali. Opens Friday at the Carlton. 94 minutes. **PG**

It's a madcap day in the life of a Farsi-language radio station based in San Francisco. But suffused throughout Babak Jalali's wonderfully wry tale is a sense of sorrow and loss, the exile's longing for return to a homeland.

Mohsen Namjoo embodies manic hilarity as Royani, the station's programming director, a novelist struggling to make the best of expat existence. His big coup: bringing Kabul Dreams, which is actually Afghanistan's first rock band, to "jam" with their idols, Metallica. It's just one of the story's many comical absurdities.

The station owner is more interested in wrestling than broadcasting while his daughter, Maral (Boshra Dastournezhad) seeks to inject some sanity into a chaotic environment. There's a whole slew of oddball characters, including long-suffering Reza (Mohammad Talani) and dear old Miss Sherbet (Bella Warda), whose long-held grief is unleashed during an unexpected on-air appearance. Jalali has constructed a true comic gem elevated by a deep sense of poignancy.

Bruce DeMara

Nowhere to Hide

Documentary directed by Zaradasht Ahmed. 86 minutes. Opening Friday at the Carlton Cinema. **STC**

Asked to shoot video in 2011 for director Zaradasht Ahmed's doc on Iraq after the U.S. military pull out, emergency hospital nurse Nori Sharif insists on filming patients and kids rather than himself, saying other lives are more interesting than his. It turns out otherwise.

He opens with contentment and hope. Bloody turmoil soon follows. There are suicide vests, sticky bombs and finally, a Daesh takeover, forcing Sharif to evacuate with his family, eventually reaching a desert refugee camp.

As an emergency medic, he captures often-graphic scenes of violence perpetuated by unknowable enemies. "You only see the symptoms," he says. "You don't understand the disease." He's desperate to stay at the hospital, even after the doctor leaves, until fleeing with his family becomes imperative. Sharif struggles to be strong; the only time he weeps is when he returns to see the hospital destroyed.

An emotionally powerful examination of the price of conflict, Sharif is honourable and brave, both as filmmaker and the symbol of a suffering people who long for peace.

LB

Song to Song (DVD)

Toronto Star – June 29, 2017 (4 of 4)

Starring Ryan Gosling, Rooney Mara, Michael Fassbender, Natalie Portman and Cate Blanchett. Directed by Terrence Malick. DVD on July 4. 129 minutes. **14A**

Texas auteur Terrence Malick's disregard for storytelling and conventional cinema structure seemed inspired in his Palme d'Or-winning *The Tree of Life* in 2011. His output since then makes indifference approach arrogance.

Song to Song is loosely based on the music scene in Malick's vibrant home city of Austin, a topic and locale that by rights should offer some kind of artistic rejuvenation after the creative wheel-spinning of *To the Wonder*, *Voyage of Time* and *Knight of Cups*.

No such luck. Bereft of ideas and anything resembling a script, Malick sets loose his A-list cast — including Ryan Gosling, Rooney Mara, Michael Fassbender, Natalie Portman and Cate Blanchett — to wander listlessly amidst couplings and uncouplings that are more tiresome than tragic. Musical pursuits become incidental to the proceedings.

"I was desperate to feel something real," Mara's character Faye whispers in voice-over about her life. Viewers of *Song to Song* can nod in weary agreement.

Extras include "The Music Behind the Movie" featurette.

PH

CHCH The Watchlist – June 30, 2017

In the Name of All Canadians

Posted: June 30, 2017 03:29:45 PM Last updated: June 30, 2017 03:49:17 PM

Category: [New Releases](#), [New Theatrical](#), [The Watchlist](#)

Tags: Canada 150, documentary film, hot docs, in the name of all canadians, the canadian charter of rights and freedoms

Celebrate Canada's 150th this weekend with Hot Docs. The documentary film festival commissioned six short films that explore The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Those shorts are being presented as the feature length film, *In the Name of All Canadians*.

In *The Long Way Home*, mobility rights listed in the Charter are questioned by looking at the case of Abousfian Abdelrazik, a Canadian citizen who was kept in exile in Sudan for years after being labelled a national-security risk by the Harper government. Directed by Aisha Jamal and Ariel Nasr, both from Afghanistan (Aisha herself came to Canada as a refugee), they offer an interesting perspective on this case and the importance of this right.

In *Last Resort* religious rights in the Charter are addressed by looking at the case of Ktunaxa Nation and the Jumbo Glacier Resort, which is now before the Supreme Court with a decision being expected this year.

The right to equality is discussed in *Lessons Injustice* as the film follows Danardo Jones, a one-time Toronto crack dealer who graduated from Carleton University and is now a lawyer, as he educates his son about how Canadian society perceives black men, and the struggles he will be faced with as he grows up.

Notwithstanding, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Patrick Reed, was inspired by today's unsettling political climate and real-life Canadian events -Japanese internment during WWII, the detainment of G20 protestors, and the stories of prisoners in solitary confinement and Muslims in Canada facing discrimination – and hypothesizes a situation in which the Notwithstanding clause in the Charter is enacted, illustrating how potentially catastrophic the clause can be to freedom in this country.

L'Inspecteur questions language rights in the Charter by exploring a time when it was illegal to teach French in Manitoba schools in the early 1900s. A personal story for sibling directors Janelle and Jérémie Wookey as both are Métis and Franco-Manitobans, and have a strong understanding of what it means to be denied the right to practice your culture.

In Part is a mosaic in the form of a series of Canadian portraits and interviews, ranging from topics related to the Charter, to the existential, to the seemingly insignificant. Inspired by the Proust questionnaire.

In the Name of All Canadians is currently playing in select theatres including the [Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema](#) in Toronto.

<http://www.chch.com/in-the-name-of-all-canadians/>

Integral Man: Music, Math, and Architecture Meet in Rosedale

July 5, 2017 5:15 pm | by Stefan Novakovic | [0 Comments](#)

The camera looks at—and out of—buildings, but seldom really inhabits them. It's an obvious problem; how do you express the three-dimensional quality of space on a two-dimensional screen? I pose that question to Director Joseph Clement, whose new film, *Integral Man*, proves one of the rare exceptions to the rule. Screening at the Hot Docs Cinema from July 7th, the film is a window into the life of mathematician James Stewart, whose final years were lived in Rosedale's Integral House, an 18,000 ft² contemporary masterpiece designed by Toronto's [Shim-Sutcliffe Architects](#).

"Light is in some ways almost the subject of the film," Clement explains, describing the attention to detail—facilitated by the use of light-sensitive 35 mm film—that defines *Integral Man*'s aesthetic. Trained as a landscape architect, Clement's aesthetic intelligence is evident in each frame. The camera takes in the view slowly, panning across the famous curves to capture the interplay of light and shade across the white oak fins that frame the unobstructed interiors.



Integral House from street level, image via GAT

The man behind the house is James Stewart, a mathematician, concert violinist, and professor, best known for publishing a near-ubiquitous series of calculus textbooks. The revenue from the books—which reportedly saw Stewart become the most-published mathematician since Euclid—made the \$32 million dollar house possible.

Stewart sought to build a house that would nourish his love of both music and mathematics, outlining the specification that the property should comfortably host a concert of 150 seated attendees—and that it should have curves. "Jim spent three years traveling the world in search of an architect," says Clement, with world-famous names like Frank Gehry and Rem Koolhaas showing interest in the project. But it was Toronto's Brigitte Shim and Howard Sutcliffe that impressed most.

Understated from street level, the five-storey house unfolds in a curtain of curved glass into the Rosedale ravine. "Jim planned to bring in sound engineers after the house was finished to work on the acoustics for the performance space," Clement tells me, "but they found that Shim-Sutcliffe's space was already near-perfect." The curves, as it turns out, make the concert space a near-replica of a violin's interior, Clement adds, explaining how Shim-Sutcliffe's aesthetic is carried through to the smallest details.

Urban Toronto.ca – July 5, 2017 (2 of 2)

The nearly 100 white oak fins that grace the walls are each carefully angled to temper the light, with the spacing varied in response to the curvature of the glass. Free of visible power outlets—"Jim hated them"—throughout the living spaces, the wood of the fins carries through all the way to the kitchen cabinets as a design element, making for a unified aesthetic. All the while, the links between music, math, and architecture, are lucidly explained by Stewart, who speaks to the camera with the quietly compelling charm of a beloved old professor.

Then comes the cancer diagnosis, and a film about architecture, music, and mathematics, poignantly stumbles into elegy. Stewart's voice stays with us as his body declines, handling the news with uncommon grace in the telling, as Clement does in the showing. It all culminates in what Stewart calls a "living wake," where the impresario joins his concert-going guests to revel in the refined power of Measha Bruegergossman's soprano.

By then, he is close to the end. But standing in his house, surrounded by people, surrounded by that reverberating voice, and surrounded by the mathematical and musical beauty of the space, you get the sense that he felt nothing but alive.

Following an acclaimed run at Toronto's Hot Docs Film Festival, *Integral Man* will be screened at Bloor Street's Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. The film's run begins on Friday July 7th at 6:15 PM, and will continue for one week. More information is available via the film's [official website](#), while the Bloor Cinema's full schedule is available [here](#).

Dawson City: Frozen Time resurrects old images beautifully

Collage of film discovered beneath the gold-rush town is compelling, but requires a commitment from the viewer

BY NORMAN WILNER

JULY 20, 2017

9:30 PM



DAWSON CITY: FROZEN TIME (Bill Morrison). 120 minutes. Opens Friday (July 21). See [listing](#).

Rating: NNNN

There's a certain grace to seeing Dawson City: Frozen Time at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. The theatre opened in 1913 as a silent movie house, so it's likely that this isn't the first time some of the images in Bill Morrison's enthralling collage project have been on its screen.

Dawson City: Frozen Time is a hypnotic mashup of narrative cinema, filtered through Morrison's fascination with the history of deteriorating celluloid.

Relying mainly on a cache of old, unstable nitrate films discovered beneath the eponymous Yukon gold-rush town, Morrison re-creates the history of both Dawson and cinema itself through images salvaged from those vintage reels, all set to a haunting, eerie score composed and performed by Sigur Rós collaborator Alex Somers.

It's a compelling and demanding piece of work, and one that requires real commitment from the viewer – you have to surrender yourself to Morrison's own fixations, and the ebb and flow of his attention from one historical storyline to another. (A digression on the early years of baseball goes from curious to essential, thanks to footage of the Chicago White Sox playing in the infamous 1919 World Series.)

If you enjoyed Morrison's art collage Decasia you'll have an idea of what to expect. And if you're coming in cold, you'll get to experience a new way of watching old images. It's beautiful.

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/dawson-city-frozen-time-resurrects-old-images-beautifully/>

Projections: '100 per cent pure adrenalin,' Canadian cinema and outdoor screenings

TIFF presents a retrospective on the work of Academy Award-winner Kathryn Bigelow, CBC shows 11 Can-film essentials, plus a wide selection of movies under the stars.



On the set of *The Hurt Locker*, Kathryn Bigelow remains the only woman to ever win an Academy Award for Best Director. (JONATHAN OLLEY / THE ASSOCIATE PRESS)

By **JASON ANDERSON** Special to the Star
Thu., July 20, 2017

Kathryn Bigelow: On the Edge: Has any contemporary filmmaker ever delivered as many movie-sized doses of “100 per cent pure adrenalin” as Kathryn Bigelow? Anyone with a tattered poster or battered VHS of *Point Break* will know the immortal tag line for Bigelow’s Keanu-rific blockbuster from the summer of 1991.

An archival print of that action flick plays this weekend’s launch for TIFF Bell Lightbox’s new retrospective on the American filmmaker who remains the only woman to ever win an Academy Award for Best Director. Titled *Kathryn Bigelow: On the Edge*, the series opens July 21 with 1987’s *Near Dark*, her hard-edged and much-imitated combination of two-fisted western tale and carnage-filled vampire movie, albeit one that also finds room for a proto-*Twilight* love story of a surprisingly tender nature.

Other highlights in the retro include *Blue Steel* (July 28), her underrated cop thriller starring Jamie Lee Curtis as a rookie officer who’s stalked by Ron Silver’s gun-obsessed sociopath, and *The Hurt Locker* (Aug. 12), the expertly crafted study of men at war that won Bigelow the wider prestige and success she’d long deserved. *Kathryn Bigelow: On the Edge* runs July 21-Aug. 15 at the Lightbox.

The Filmmakers: In the latest example of all things Canada 150, CBC-TV celebrates our nation’s cinema with *The Filmmakers*, a summer series that combines showings of 11 Can-film essentials with episodes of a new 30-minute show in which critic Johanna Schneller interviews such luminaries as Atom Egoyan, Zacharias Kunuk, Sarah Polley and Denis Villeneuve. The series premieres July 22 with *I Killed My Mother* and a look at its maker,

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Quebecois cinema darling Xavier Dolan. Upcoming movies include Polley's *Stories We Tell* (July 29), Deepa Mehta's *Water* (Aug. 12) and Villeneuve's *Incendies* (Sept. 23).

Outdoor screenings: Though they may prefer clear evenings to drizzly ones, patrons of the city's summer outdoor movie screenings are a hardy lot with no lack of options. This weekend's slate includes *Doctor Strange* at Downsview Park's Movies in the Meadow on July 21 and Christopher Guest's *Best in Show* at the Christie Pits Film Festival on July 23. Then on July 25, the Open Roof Festival pairs the fireworks doc *Brimstone & Glory* with a live set by LOLAA while City Cinema at Yonge-Dundas Square presents *Ladies & Gentlemen . . . Mr. Leonard Cohen* ahead of a rather more raucous music flick named *The Blues Brothers*. On July 26, your choices are *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* at Regent Park and *Window Horses* at Harbourfront Centre's Concert Stage. So grab your blankets and have at it.

The War Show, Dawson City: Frozen Time and Restless Creature: Wendy Whelan: New films on the Syrian civil war, the Yukon and a legendary ballerina dominate this week's slate at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. A startling doc that first played town at TIFF 2016, *The War Show* is culled from hundreds of hours of citizen-shot footage of Syria as the country slipped from the hopeful days of the pro-democracy protests in early 2011 into the chaos of its seemingly endless civil war. An equally unique study of a very different place, *Dawson City: Frozen Time* draws from silent films shot in the Yukon in the 1910s and '20s that were preserved under a hockey rink by a local bank employee and then rediscovered nearly 50 years later in 1978. Director Bill Morrison will explain more when he attends a post-screening Q&A on July 21. Finally, *Restless Creature: Wendy Whelan* profiles one of the famous American dancer during her last season with the New York City Ballet. All three films opens July 21 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

La Boheme on stage and screen at the Revue: No Sunday afternoon event could ever be as operatic as the latest instalment of the Revue Cinema's Silent Revue on July 23. Patrons get to experience the majesty of Puccini's *La Bohème* both in the form of King Vidor's 1926 adaptation starring Lillian Gish and as a live performance of select pieces by an ensemble led by mezzo-soprano Cassandra Warner and baritone Jeffrey Carl. Pianist Bill O'Meara provides live accompaniment for both parts of the event, which is co-presented by the Toronto Silent Film Festival.

In Brief

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/07/20/projections-100-per-cent-pure-adrenalin-canadian-cinema-and-outdoor-screenings.html>

Dawson City: Frozen Time revels in the silent era

Chris Knight: The result is a beautiful ride through early filmdom, and a rare glimpse at a period of cinema history that has suffered from both accident and neglect



A still from Dawson City: Frozen Time. Glenbow Archives; Hypnotic Pictures; Picture Palace Pictures

[Chris Knight](#)

July 21, 2017
12:08 PM EDT

Here's a found footage film with a twist – the footage in this film really was found, in (of all places) an abandoned swimming pool beneath a burned-down athletic club in Dawson City, Yukon.

Dawson City: Frozen Time includes the story of how a cache of silent film reels wound up there. Briefly, Dawson used to be the end of the line for movies travelling north from Hollywood. Shipping them back was expensive, so they just stayed in the Far North. No longer wanted and dangerously flammable, some were burned, others deep-sixed in the Yukon River, and 500 were tipped into the pool, which was being converted into a skating rink.

That was in 1929. The treasure trove was rediscovered by a construction worker in 1978, and the films – features, shorts and newsreels, including rare footage of the scandal-plagued 1919 World Series – were shipped to Ottawa.

The tale is worthy of its own documentary, but filmmaker Bill Morrison has other plans. Like his first feature, 2002's Decasia, he wanted to use the footage to tell its own story, silently but for a modernist score.

The results are uneven. At two hours, Dawson City: Frozen Time is easily at least 20 minutes too long. Much could be cut from the film's beginnings, which laboriously chronicle the history of nitrate film stock, the Lumière brothers, etc., all to a lugubrious soundtrack by Alex Somers.

Things get more interesting when we get to the Klondike Gold Rush of the 1890s, which quickly swelled Dawson's tiny population into the tens of thousands. They included a newsboy named

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Sid Grauman, who grew up to become a cinema impresario; and Friedrich Trump, a German whose lucrative brothel no doubt helped fund his grandson's presidential campaign. ("We have come to stay," he lied; Trump moved back to Germany in 1901.)

Morrison doesn't shy away from using all manner of old films to illustrate the story of the boom and bust that was the gold rush. But most of the images are credited to the "film find." They include snippets of films about the Yukon, films shot there, and some that just happened to play in one of the community's early cinemas.

We see footage from the British War Office about how grenades are made; a dramatization of the Red Scare; documentary footage showing how mining samples could be "salted" to appear to contain gold; and news of the still-unsolved 1922 murder of director William Desmond Tyler – local news, as he and at least one suspect had spent time in Dawson City.

The result is a beautiful ride through early filmdom, and a rare glimpse at a period of cinema history that has suffered from both accident and neglect. Turns out the seemingly neglectful burial in the Yukon permafrost turned out to be a happy accident after all.

Dawson City: Frozen Time unearths an unintended time capsule



Combining archival footage with contemporary music and photography, Dawson City: Frozen Time awakens an unintended time capsule.

COURTESY KATHY JONES GATES; HYPNOTIC PICTURES; PICTURE PALACE PICTURES

BRAD WHEELER

PUBLISHED JULY 21, 2017 UPDATED JULY 21, 2017

The composer Alex Somers wanted the score to the stunning documentary, Dawson City: Frozen Time, to sound the way the film looked. "The sound component," he says, "was more important than the melodies or rhythmic choices I made."

The look of the mostly silent and semi-experimental picture is poignantly haunting, as is Somers's score. The soundtrack is never obtrusive but always noticeable – ambient, glassy funeral music to a story about a gold-rush boom-and-bust town that lived and died over and over again.

Opening Friday at Toronto's Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, Dawson City: Frozen Time is a found-footage curiosity from the director Bill Morrison, a New Yorker known for his pairing of archival footage with contemporary music. It's quite a piece of work, with the nut of it having to do with a stash of silent films from the 1910s and 1920s buried in a swimming pool in the centre of the sub-Arctic turn-of-the-century town and unearthed some 50 years later.

Using those water-damaged but still useable films, along with pristine photographs from the Klondike Gold Rush, newsreel footage and other films from the era, Morrison awakens an unintended time capsule to poetically tell Dawson City's story – a kind of quaint tragedy.

The Globe and Mail – July 21, 2017 (2 of 3)

The musician Somers, who has collaborated with the Icelandic art-rockers Sigur Ros and who contributed the music to 2016's comic drama *Captain Fantastic* starring Viggo Mortenson, was drawn to the project by the degraded quality of the long-buried celluloid.

"I love the way old photographs look," he says from Los Angeles. "I like the way old furniture looks and feels. There's something about these things from another era – the whole spell of it."

The process of scoring *Dawson City: Frozen Time* was a departure for Somers. Rather than write specifically to the picture on the screen, with short, specific cues, he composed as if he were making an album, with long impressionistic stretches of music. The film uses on-screen titles; the lack of spoken narration made it easier to match the moods of the music and images later.

"None of the normal rules applied," he says. "Writing to the spirit of the film was liberating."

The spirit of the film is one of pioneer-country high times and misfortune. We learn that the gold-rush town burned down nine times in its first nine years. We also learn that if mining was booming, so was the business of mining the miners, be it through casinos or other practices.

The rough-cut city of Dawson City had its movie theatres, too. The reason all those silent films were buried is two-fold. One, Dawson City was a dead-end on the circuit. The films were two or three years old by the time they reached the place, and it was too expensive to ship them back to the studios. And two, as the old nitrate stock was spontaneously flammable – as any fan of Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* knows so well – it was hazardous to store. The decision was eventually made to use the canisters of more than 500 films as landfill.

Dawson City is poetically described in the documentary as a rip-roaring shack town that sprang up overnight, "where the only cheap thing was human life and where a lucky man could pluck of fortune out of the earth."

The Globe and Mail – July 21, 2017 (3 of 3)

The film found in the ground may or may not be a fortune, but it is gold in the right hands. Filmmaker Morrison mines artfully, with no small help from Somers and his affecting accompaniment.

"It's a place that had its Las Vegas moment, with glitz and glamour," Somers says. "But fires keep happening. And people were dying. It's kind of a brutal story."

Exclaim! – July 21, 2017 (1 of 3)

Sigur Rós Collaborator Alex Somers Discusses Soundtracking Ancient Film Reels in 'Dawson City: Frozen Time'



By [Laura Di Girolamo](#)

Published Jul 21, 2017

Through sound, moving image and subtitles, *Dawson City: Frozen Time* tells a vast and far-reaching story of boom and bust, loss and memory. After over 500 reels of film were found buried and forgotten in the Yukon town of Dawson City in 1978, Bill Morrison pieces these abandoned pieces of cinema together to link the often-unbelievable history of a 19th-century gold rush mining town to the age of silent film.

It's a celebratory exhibition of things that are broken or left behind, and Morrison wastes no time in the film's 120 minutes to make sure every story that intertwines with Dawson City is told. From the gold-digging prospectors who managed to burn the town down nine times in its first year to the Indigenous population forced out by settlers, *Dawson City: Frozen Time* offers not only a look into discarded silent films lost to history, but a real-life version of the wild west Hollywood is so enamoured with. We watch the rise and fall of dreams, of wealth and glory, of the halcyon days of the early gold rush that hovered so often on the precipice of destruction, just as these flammable nitrate film reels came so close to destruction themselves. The fact that they exist, even scratched and damaged as they are, is a marvel.

The film is set to evocative, haunting, and elegiac music that deconstructs the meaning of a film score in the same way that *Dawson City* deconstructs film history. It was composed by musician and frequent Sigur Rós collaborator Alex Somers. Exclaim! spoke to Somers about how music sets tone and narrative, the difference between scoring nonlinear vs. narrative films, and the viewer's journey.

How did you get involved with this film, and what the process of recording was like?

I was brought in over three years ago for this project – I went to Bill's apartment in New York before he even started editing. He just had a ton of footage, and we just watched and drank tea and talked about what mood he wanted to achieve. He was really keen to never have the music be too on-the-nose, and sound "old timey." That was the only firm instruction I got from him, to not score it like an old-time film. I wouldn't have been inclined to do that, anyway.

I thought it would be really cool if the music mimicked the picture quality. I felt like the sound component of this project was equally as important, if not more important, as the composition. I

Exclaim! – July 21, 2017 (2 of 3)

wanted it to sound like the film looked, kind of dying or decaying or falling apart. So that was a really fun task, because I've always been drawn to these kinds of objects. There's an inherent beauty that's hard to put your finger on.

So I went back to my studio and wrote about 20 minutes of music, not to picture, just freeform, that I hoped would inspire Bill and so he could listen to something while he was editing. He used that 20 minutes plus an album that I published in 2009 with my partner (Sigur Rós' Jón Þór "Jónsi" Birgisson, who performs with Somers as Jónsi & Alex) called *Riceboy Sleeps*. So he used that 20 minutes of original music plus that record to edit the film, very slowly. That was the template for where we'd go.

Bill gave me tons of freedom, and I would not work on the project for several months, then he'd get in touch and send me a rough cut, and I'd work really hard on some music. I would always send at least an hour of music. I liked to see how it built, and I wanted it to sound cohesive. My first draft was a bit optimistic and hopeful, but Bill encouraged me to make it darker, because for him this film is more of a tragedy about the city of Dawson, and he wanted the music to reflect that. So I worked on this on and off for ten months. It was my dream project, scoring to old crusty movies found underground. I'm so happy I got to do it. I never would have written two straight hours of music before in my life, but I was so inspired by the project that it forced me to step up to the task.

This film has no narration, instead relying on the images and some title cards to tell a story. How often did you try and tie the film's score to visual cues versus the story being told through title cards?

There was nothing really literal about what I did. It was more about mood. When I'm writing, I'm just watching the picture and thinking about the initial thread, how I want the music to embody the aesthetic of the warn out film. After I was done composing something, though, I would play with it to fit the picture and go over different scenes, see if the sound could reoccur or if it would feel repetitive. So there was a lot of trial and error, setting music to picture, nudging it around. I'd give it my best try, and I'd send it to Bill. Sometimes he'd like my placement or have suggestions. That part was quite fun. As you're watching a film scene, music can alter the tone radically and tell you if something dark or scary is coming soon. So it was really cool and fun to collaborate with Bill in that regard, nudging the music to certain scenes.

How is it different scoring nonlinear films like this versus narrative films? How is the process different?

It's so different. It's not even the same thing. Making this music was just writing music, period. Composing a film score, you're part of a big picture. Usually the musical cues are very short, and they're mixed kinda low and subliminal. *Dawson City* is the kind of film where you need the musical element to keep propelling the story forward, and regular narrative film doesn't rely so much on the music. It's a dialogue that works with a storyline, so you play a smaller role. That kind of scoring wasn't really taking place with *Dawson City*, it was just music that felt good. It wasn't more complicated than that.

There are a lot of themes in this film. What's the journey that you want viewers to experience while watching and listening to *Dawson City*?

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Bill could talk about all this for days. While I was writing we had a couple of long emails back and forth, and it was really fun to read about what this story meant to him. There's a lot about birth, and rebirth, the death of the town and the town being rebuilt again. Like I said, though, I'm not the most literal person. I just close my eyes and zone out, and go with a good feeling, and if that carries through, then that's enough for me.

I love the idea of an old film where the picture is falling apart. It just creates something haunting and magical. If you're a history buff and like information, a lot of people are into that aspect of the film. I've met some people who just like watching old movies with the sound off because it looks beautiful. I like that the film can check both of those boxes for people. It's just a cool visual sonic experience that's unusual and not following any rules. It's an interesting and weird movie.

It's almost like it deconstructs what we think of a film score. It's two hours of uninterrupted music with two hours of uninterrupted footage. It's kind of like listening to a two-hour album.

Yeah, that's part of why it was so daunting. Originally the film was meant to be much shorter, but as Bill kept researching, he kept going down these rabbit holes and discovering more side stories he wanted to tell.

Does the music you composed tell any side stories?

I'd like to think that if you listened to it with your eyes closed it would tell its own story. But I'm such a feeler and less heady in that regard, and I can't really say "this is the thing that this is telling," but it's the feeling of being moved by something and not really knowing why. Like, why is this old photograph making me feel this way? Why is old footage that's worn out and a bit fucked up more interesting to look at than a crystal clear video capture? For me, it just is, and you don't have to know why, because there's some magic in it. I hope the music embodies that, and it captures that feeling even if you can't put your finger on it.

Dawson City: Frozen Time opens at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on July 21. Interview edited for length.

[http://exclaim.ca/music/article/sigur r s collaborator alex somers discusses soundtracking ancient film reels in dawson city frozen time](http://exclaim.ca/music/article/sigur-r-s-collaborator-alex-somers-discusses-soundtracking-ancient-film-reels-in-dawson-city-frozen-time)

Rumble rocks your musical preconceptions, and a riveting Lady Macbeth is found: reviews



Reel Brief reviews of theatrical openers *Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World* and *Lady Macbeth*, plus *Colossal*, *Graduation* and *Going in Style* on DVD.

By [PETER HOWELL](#) Movie Critic
[BRUCE DEMARA](#) Entertainment Reporter
Thu., July 27, 2017

Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World

Documentary on the global influence of Indigenous musicians. Directed by Catherine Bainbridge and Alfonso Maiorana. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 97 minutes. **STC**

A great rock doc and also necessary correction to the historical record, *Rumble* reveals how musicians with Indigenous roots have shaken, rattled and rolled pop culture.

They include guitar greats Jimi Hendrix, Link Wray, Charley Patton, Jesse Ed Davis and The Band's Robbie Robertson, as well as singers Rita Coolidge, Buffy Sainte-Marie and Mildred Bailey and the rapper Taboo.

Their musical contributions may be celebrated, but their heritage is often unknown or deliberately suppressed — often by the musicians themselves, for fear of discrimination.

"Be proud you're an Indian, but be careful who you tell," Robertson says in the film, quoting advice he received growing up in the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ont. Robertson and The Band helped Bob Dylan transform in the 1960s from the acoustic folkie of "Blowin' in the Wind" to the driving rocker of "Like a Rolling Stone."

Catherine Bainbridge directs *Rumble*, with Alfonso Maiorana co-directing. Bainbridge co-founded Montreal's Rezolution Pictures International, an Indigenous-owned film and TV production company that previously made *Reel Injun*, a Peabody-winning doc about Hollywood's depiction of native characters.

Toronto Star – July 27, 2017 (2 of 2)

Rumble arrives with multiple accolades, including Sundance's Special Jury Award for Masterful Storytelling and two audience awards at Toronto's Hot Docs. Using archival audio and concert footage, plus new interviews, the film demonstrates how Indigenous musicians have roots as deep as blues artists, who are often incorrectly cited as the original source of the music that branched into rock, pop, soul, hip-hop and other variants.

The film also explores how the U.S. and Canadian governments practiced what Bainbridge calls the "deliberate erasure" of history, because they fearfully equated Indigenous music with social unrest.

A good example of this is the title song, a thundering power-chord progenitor by late guitar legend Wray and his Ray-Men band. "Rumble" was banned by many authorities upon its 1958 release, for fear that it might have the power to incite violence, despite being a purely instrumental tune.

Indeed, singer Iggy Pop and guitarist Steven Van Zandt, the latter a member of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, are among the many musicians in the film who bear witness to the song's Pied Piper appeal: Iggy says "Rumble" made him want to be a rocker and Van Zandt calls it "the theme song of juvenile delinquency."

Other guitarists who have named Wray as an influence include Neil Young, Jimmy Page and Pete Townshend.

Rumble is truth you can rock to. Play it loud!

Peter Howell

Missing Richard Simmons is coming to Toronto

Toronto's live Podcast Festival returns to the city this fall at the Hot Docs Cinema, and one major player's appearance already has everyone talking.

Missing Richard Simmons, one of this year's most buzzed about podcasts, and its host Dan Taberski will be in Toronto October 12 for an on-stage chat with the CBC's Lindsay Michael to talk about the story behind the story.

Taberski will also discuss tough editorial choices and the last minute cuts he had to make to the series finale, which aired last March.

The one-time podcast series explores how Simmons went from a very public, over-the-top fitness instructor to a sudden recluse. No other episodes are planned so far.

Other big-name podcasts making appearances at this year's festival, which runs from October 12 to 15, are Canadaland, Grownups Reading Things They Wrote as Kids, The Nod, Ear Hustle (a podcast about life inside the San Quentin State Prison), and the New York Times' Modern Love.

There are also panel discussions and panels about the world of podcasting during the festival. Tickets range from \$19-\$39 and are on sale now online.

Toronto Star – August 11, 2017 (1 of 3)

Mario Bava, trailblazer in film terror, remembered at Royal: Projections

By JASON ANDERSON Special to the Star
Fri., Aug. 11, 2017

Mario Bavafest: Largely deemed a merchant of trash for much of his career, Mario Bava has become a rather more venerated and respected figure since his death in 1980. Indeed, if not for the late director's lurid innovations in films like *Bay of Blood* — a bloody 1971 shocker that was the unofficial inspiration for *Friday the 13th* — the Hollywood slasher film may have never existed. Martin Scorsese, Tim Burton, Quentin Tarantino and Nicolas Winding Refn have all cited him as an inspiration. For further proof of his influence, just consider the parallels between his 1965 eerie science-fiction thriller *Planet of the Vampires* and Sir Ridley Scott's *Alien*.

The Canadian premiere of a new 4K restoration of that cult Bava fave launches a weekend-long "Mario Bavafest" at the Royal on Aug. 11. The four-film retrospective also includes a 50th anniversary restoration of *Kill, Baby . . . Kill!*, a tale of terror that's as good as its title, and 1960's *Black Sunday*, an indelible exercise in gothic horror starring the original scream queen, Barbara Steele.

Barbara Steele in Mario Bava's 1960 horror film *Black Sunday*. (VIA ROYAL CINEMA)

Mario Bavafest runs Aug. 11-13 at the Royal.

Julian Schnabel: A Private Portrait: A major star of New York's art scene of the 1980s, Schnabel became nearly as notable as a film director in more recent years thanks to the critically acclaimed likes of *Before Night Falls* and *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. Now he serves as a film subject for *Julian Schnabel: A Private Portrait*, a biographical doc that debuted at the Tribeca festival in April.

Toronto Star – August 11, 2017 (2 of 3)

Pappi Corsicato's film — which includes interviews with such Schnabel pals and admirers as Willem Dafoe, Laurie Anderson and Al Pacino — plays Aug. 11-17 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

Outdoor screenings: This week's slate of outdoor movie screenings begins with *The Lego Batman Movie* at Downsview Park's Movies in the Meadow on Aug. 11. Then on Aug. 12, Corso Italia is the place to be for newly restored versions of *A Fistful of Dollars* and *Cinema Paradiso*. Jets and Sharks cause a heap of trouble when *West Side Story* plays the Christie Pits Film Festival on Aug. 13. City Cinema at Yonge-Dundas Square opts for Sarah Polley's *Take This Waltz* on Aug. 15. Temporarily shifting from its usual Tuesday night to Wednesday, Open Roof Festival presents *Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World* and live music by Liam Titcomb at 99 Sudbury on Aug. 16. On the same evening, the Regent Park Film Festival wraps up its Under the Stars season with *Hidden Figures* and visitors to Harbourfront Centre's Concert Stage get down with the dance flick *How She Move*.

Like Totally '80s: Nostalgia has never been more intense for the decade of acid-wash jeans and way too much Tiffany. The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema goes all-in with Like Totally '80s, a series of retro fare that combines such decade-defining hits as *The Breakfast Club* and *Dirty Dancing* with recent '80s-themed docs like Toronto director Matt Sadowski's John Hughes tribute *Don't You Forget About Me*. It all runs Aug. 11-17. Nor is that the week's only thoroughly tubular movie event: the Carlton hosts a run for *The Never Ending Story* and NOW's Free Flick Mondays series at the Royal offers up *The Princess Bride* on Aug. 14.

In Brief:

- The Korean political drama *A Taxi Driver* and the Chinese romance *Once Upon a Time* are two more new releases in Toronto cinemas this weekend.

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- The Habari Africa Festival at Harbourfront Centre this weekend includes screenings of the docs *Ghosts of Our Forest* and *Mali Blues* and the Ethiopian-Canadian drama *Two Ways to Heaven* on Saturday.
- Come say goodbye to Tatiana Maslany's many, many clones when the Royal screens the *Orphan Black* series finale on Aug. 12.
- Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* plays Cineplex's Classic Film Series at participating venues on Aug. 13 and 16.
- The Toronto Film Society's summer series on Dangerous Dames continues at the Carlton with a double bill of *Dressed to Kill* and *Leave Her to Heaven* on Aug. 14.
- Michelangelo Antonioni's quintessentially mod and impeccably cool *Blow-Up* plays TIFF Bell Lightbox on Aug. 16.

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Looking back at Reagan, a long, hard haul through France, and more: Projections

Dangerous Dames and the man who first made Godzilla move get screen tributes in Toronto this week.



Nancy Reagan (left, with bespectacled Reagan Administration spokesman Larry Speakes and David Gergen) has a surprise birthday cake for then-president Ronald Reagan at a 1983 news conference, in a moment from the new documentary *The Reagan Show*. (SYSTEM / VIA HOT DOCS)

By **JASON ANDERSON** Special to the Star
Thu., Aug. 17, 2017

The Reagan Show: One of two fascinating new releases at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema this week, *Expo 67: Mission Impossible* delves into a story that's surprisingly little-known: a five-year effort to make Expo 67 happen. The same could be said of *The Reagan Show*. Drawing from news footage, White House video documentation and many other sources, filmmakers Sierra Pettengill and Pacho Velez have crafted a cunning portrait of a movie actor turned American president whose degree of media savvy may have trumped even Trump's.

Expo 67: Mission Impossible *Expo 67: Mission Impossible* and *The Reagan Show* *The Reagan Show* open Aug. 18 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

Le Ride: Taking his break from his duties as host of *The Amazing Race*, Phil Keoghan and his fellow cycling nut Ben Cornell set off on a highly unusual quest in 2013: to attempt the same route taken by a fabled quartet of Australian and New Zealand riders for the Tour de France in 1928, regarded as the most difficult race of its kind in the history of the sport. A new doc about Keoghan's and the events that inspired it, *Le Ride* *Le Ride* plays Cineplex's Yonge-Dundas location on Aug. 23.

Outdoor screenings: Patrons of Downsview Park's *Movies in the Meadow* can see for themselves that — contrary to what the haters say on Twitter — Ryan Gosling does not look at his feet too much in *La La Land* when it plays on Aug. 18. Then on Aug. 19-20, the Christie Pits Film Festival presents a pair of closing-weekend events that includes a special surprise screening of a "hard-hitting sports epic" whose title has yet to be announced but which we can assure you is awesome.

Toronto Star – August 17, 2017 (2 of 2)

Men With Brooms, meanwhile, makes a clean sweep of City Cinema at Yonge-Dundas Square on Aug. 22. After a live set by Marlon Chaplin on Aug. 22, Open Roof Festival makes 99 Sudbury a scary place with *It Comes at Night*. Not quite done with the summer, Regent Park Film Festival hosts an Aug. 23 screening for a TBA title that had been previously rained out. The same night at Harbourfront Centre's Concert Stage, you can also opt for Guillermo del Toro's Toronto-made monster-movie spectacular *Pacific Rim*.

Vintage faves at the Carlton and Cineplex: Though the Carlton's schedule often has a bounty of beloved if sometimes freaky films of yesteryear, the selection is very generous this week. As a tribute to the late Haruo Nakajima — the Japanese actor who got sweaty inside the rubber suits for many kaiju classics, including the original *Godzilla* — there's a free screening of 1968's *Destroy All Monsters* on Aug. 18. The Carlton Midnight Society also presents Charles Laughton's 1955 noir classic *Night of the Hunter* on Aug. 19. The Toronto Film Society's summer series on "Dangerous Dames" continues with 1949's *Flaxy Martin* and 1950's *Born to Be Bad* on Aug. 21. Last but not least, the Carlton hosts a weeklong run of *Labyrinth*, a movie that's beloved for many reasons, the best of which is David Bowie's mullet.

Meanwhile, participating Cineplex locations fight the dog-days effect with 30 Days of Summer, featuring special screenings of hits and crowd-pleasers. It also launches a new program of oldies at participating VIP locations with *Dirty Dancing* on Aug. 21.

Airport 77: In the winning entry in this week's contest for most unique movie event (which doesn't actually exist but just go with it), the Royal presents a screening of *Airport 77* and a lecture on "airline anxiety and the golden age of hijacking." Critic and programmer Kier-La Janisse delves into the fascinating history of Hollywood's often-trashy take on the real-life scourge of airplane hijackings through the late '60s and '70s on Aug. 19.

In Brief:

- A Japanese animated feature about a resilient teenager's experiences in the Second World War, *In This Corner of the World* opens Aug. 18 in Toronto theatres.
- *The Last Dalai Lama?* takes an intimate look at the life and times of the Tibetan religious leader — it opens Aug. 18 at the Carlton.
- Also this weekend, the dance: made in canada/fait au Canada contemporary dance festival at the Betty Oliphant Theatre contains free nightly programs of short dance films.
- Marvel's master talks shop in *Extraordinary: Stan Lee*, an onstage conversation event that gets big-screen broadcasts at Cineplex's Yonge-Dundas, Queensway and Vaughan locations on Aug. 22.
- One of the most deliriously weird horror comedies of the '80s, Frank Henenlotter's *Brain Damage* plays Rue Morgue's CineMacabre series at the Royal on Aug. 24.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/08/17/looking-back-at-reagan-a-long-hard-haul-through-france-and-more-projections.html>

Ingrid Goes West keeps things tense, The Hitman's Bodyguard takes no chances, and more: Reel Brief reviews



Reel Brief reviews of new theatrical openers *Ingrid Goes West*, *The Hitman's Bodyguard*, *This Time Tomorrow* and *Expo 67: Mission Impossible*, plus *Guardians of the Galaxy*, Vol. 2 on DVD.

By PETER HOWELL Movie Critic

BRUCE DEMARA Entertainment Reporter

Thu., Aug. 17, 2017

Ingrid Goes West

Starring Aubrey Plaza, Elizabeth Olsen, O'Shea Jackson, Jr., Wyatt Russell and Billy Magnussen. Directed by Matt Spicer. Opens Friday at Cineplex Yonge-Dundas. 98 minutes. **14A**

Omigod! Ingrid's life is #perfect!

Actually, it isn't, far from it. Socially inept Ingrid Thorburn spends most of her days on online, stalking other women whose obliging "likes" she wrongly takes for BFF status — such as the innocent bride Ingrid pepper-sprayed when a wedding invite didn't arrive. That earned her a stint in the psych ward, absorbing inspirational messages like this one: "Believe you can and you are halfway there."

You never know whether to laugh at, pity or fear this character, fiercely played by Aubrey Plaza, which is what makes Matt Spicer's *Ingrid Goes West* such a compelling watch. It comes on like a Sundance comedy — it won writer/director Spicer and co-writer David Branson Smith the screenwriting prize at Sundance 2017 — but it unfolds like a Hitchcock suspense.

It's about confusing real friends with fake #friends, a cautionary tale that might give pause to anyone who blithely accepts social media come-ons.

Ingrid is obviously unhinged, but she's shrewd enough not to alarm her prey by coming on too strong. An early scene has her fretting over how many snickering "heh hehs" would look too weird for an Instagram reply.

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She normally confines her sociopathy to her suburban Pennsylvania neighbourhood, but a sudden \$60,000 inheritance gives her the cash she needs to travel to L.A. in search of her latest obsession: Instagram “influencer” Taylor Sloane (Elizabeth Olsen).

Taylor has 267,000 followers, who eat up her inane posts: “Another day, another avocado toast!” Olsen, currently on screen as a resourceful FBI agent in the wilderness thriller *Wind River*, is as adept at playing vivid characters as she is shrewd ones.

Ingrid wants her stalking of Taylor to appear #random, but it’s the most dangerous form of #fandom. She uses a dognapping to insinuate herself into Taylor’s life, snorting coke and making the scene along with the clueless media maven, in the company of Taylor’s struggling-artist husband Ezra (Wyatt Russell) and her hedonistic brother Nicky (Billy Magnussen).

The only remotely normal passenger in this clown car is Ingrid’s landlord Dan (O’Shea Jackson Jr.), whose boyish love of all things Batman adds depth to a role that Jackson makes more than just comic support.

There’s a reference in *Ingrid Goes West* to *Single White Female* and it certainly approaches the earlier film’s level of psychological horror. But Plaza, whose skill at playing manipulative characters has been witnessed in *Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates* and other amusements, never seems like a truly dangerous person, just a really lonely and needy one.

She wouldn’t really do anything #crazy, would she?

Peter Howell

The Hitman’s Bodyguard

Starring Samuel L. Jackson, Ryan Reynolds, Gary Oldman and Salma Hayek. Directed by Patrick Hughes. Opens Friday at GTA theatres. 118 minutes. **14A**

The Hitman’s Bodyguard is the cinematic equivalent of a guilty burger drive-thru meal when dinner is too wearisome to contemplate.

Samuel L. Jackson is the bad guy who’s not so bad. Ryan Reynolds is the cynic who’s there when it counts. Gary Oldman plays a Eurotrash villain almost in his sleep. Director Patrick Hughes previously made *The Expendables 3*.

The set-up recalls *Midnight Run*: disgraced top bodyguard Michael Bryce (Reynolds) can redeem himself by keeping alive ace contract killer Darius Kincaid (Jackson). Kincaid must testify in an international court against genocidal Belarusian strongman Vladislav Dukhovich (Oldman).

None of these men want to be together, least of all Bryce and Kincaid, who are also getting grief from their erstwhile girlfriends, played by Élodie Yung and a scenery-chewing Salma Hayek.

Toronto Star – August 17, 2017 (3 of 4)

There's a ridiculous 24-hour time limit imposed to goose the formulaic plot. It goes as you'd expect, with much tough-guy repartee and everybody hitting their marks. There's mild novelty in the boat, car and motorcycle chases through the streets and canals of Amsterdam. You want fries with that?

PH

This Time Tomorrow

Starring Laura Osma, Maruía Shelton, Francisco Zaldua. Written and directed by Lina Rodriguez. Opens Friday at TIFF Bell Lightbox. 85 minutes. **PG**

The film is a rumination of sorts on the everyday struggles of an ordinary family, a couple and their rebellious teenage daughter.

The opening invites the filmgoer to contemplate a scarred, old tree in a forest as birds chirp in the distance. The closing scene: a cloud-studded sky. Filmmaker Lina Rodriguez is all about minimalism.

We see Ade (Laura Osma) snuggling in bed with her father Francisco (Francisco Zaldua) as she tries plaintively to get her mother's attention. The camera lingers.

Ade's struggle with her parents is a familiar one. She challenges their authority at every turn. They push back but with a growing sense of weariness. Ade is not the most sympathetic of characters, merely a typical adolescent struggling for autonomy.

Osma delivers an adept performance as Ade while Zaldua's is mostly internal. It is Maruía Shelton as Ade's mother, Lena, whose eyes gaze into eternity, who is the most watchable.

There aren't any big revelations here, just a gentle exploration of the daily rhythms of life.

Bruce DeMara

Expo 67: Mission Impossible

Documentary by Eric Ruel, Guylaine Maroist, Michel Barbeau. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 68 minutes. **STC**

The title may seem grandiose but it's surprisingly apt.

Little known fact: Montreal lost its third bid to hold a World's Fair in March 1960 to Moscow (by one vote!) only to be awarded it in November 1962 when the Russian capital withdrew.

Montreal had to pull together something in less than five years that took previous cities anywhere from eight to 10 years to complete.

Toronto Star – August 17, 2017 (4 of 4)

Relying on the National Archives — where films, pictures and documents have lain untouched for decades — and interviews with a few of surviving members of the original Expo 67 team, the trio of directors achieve a remarkable feat.

They outline the enormity of the task, including the political squabbles — late prime minister John Diefenbaker, then in opposition, describes the enterprise as a “roman orgy” of spending — and build real tension as the countdown proceeds to April 28, 1967.

Even the term, Expo, was controversial.

Canadians can be justifiably proud. But put the flags down and just watch an engrossing and well-executed documentary.

BD

Guardians of the Galaxy, Vol. 2 (DVD)

Starring Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, Dave Bautista, Bradley Cooper and Vin Diesel.
Written/directed by James Gunn. Out Aug. 22 on DVD. 136 minutes. **PG**

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 is just like every other blockbuster sequel in its quest to give us more of everything, even though this Marvel Comics property originally sought to blow up convention. But that's all right.

With writer/director James Gunn again at the helm, *Vol. 2* sees abducted Earthling Peter “Star-Lord” Quill (Chris Pratt), warrior Gamora (Zoe Saldana), muscleman Drax (Dave Bautista), hybrid handyman Rocket Raccoon (voiced by Bradley Cooper) and adorable offshoot Baby Groot (voiced by Vin Diesel) confronting not just an expanded universe of villains but also more complicated family and romantic connections.

They'll be joined, with mixed motives and outcomes both comic and dramatic, by Gamora's adopted sister Nebula (Karen Gillan), insect-faced alien Mantis (Pom Klementieff) and blue-skinned Ravagers bandit Yondu (Michael Rooker). Kurt Russell plays Peter's long-gone birth father, suddenly back in his son's life. The truth is out there.

Extras include an audio commentary by James Gunn, deleted scenes and making-of featurettes.

PH

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/08/17/ingrid-goes-west-keeps-things-tense-the-hitmans-bodyguard-takes-no-chances-and-more-reel-brief-reviews.html>

Hot Docs London to take over Bertha DocHouse for one weekend in September

Winnie Mandela, sex in India and Honduran family life are on the agenda for Hot Docs London at Bloomsbury's Bertha DocHouse this September.

This month, North America's largest documentary festival will hit the UK's shores with Hot Docs London. Ten films will be shown across the weekend, including features, shorts and compilation films. The series of screenings between 21 and 24 September will showcase the most acclaimed documentaries from this year's festival in partnership with the Bertha DocHouse in Bloomsbury.

"We're very excited to be bringing some of the most buzzed about films from this year's Hot Docs to London, especially because it gives us the opportunity to partner with the terrific team at the Bertha DocHouse," said Hot Docs executive director Brett Hendrie. "They're truly doc lovers through and through, and we look forward to putting on a great show for London audiences."

"We are thrilled to bring this selection of films from the Hot Docs Festival 2017 to our London cinema," commented Elizabeth Wood, director of Bertha DocHouse. "It's an honour to partner with this great Festival, which continues to be a flagship in the art of documentary, and bring to UK audiences a taste of their best Canadian and international feature docs. We at Bertha DocHouse look forward to the event with anticipation." "The Canadian High Commission here in the UK is very proud to be able to support the innovative and captivating world of documentary filmmaking," added High Commissioner Janice Charette. "It is especially rewarding to share some of Canada's vibrant filmmakers from Hot Docs with London audiences as part of our celebrations of Canada 150. I know you will not be disappointed in the talent on offer."

Here's what's on:

Miro Magazine – September 2017 (2 of 3)

Let there be light

Director Mila Aung-Thwin will be in attendance for a post-screening Q&A about her film, for which this screening is the UK premiere. The Canadian film looks at attempts to build a sun here on Earth to unleash clean energy to power the future.

Thursday, September 21st

Blurred lines: inside the art world

Directed by Barry Avrich, who will attend the screening for a follow up Q&A session, the Canadian film casts its eye over the wonderful world of art dealership, collection and life as an artist.

Friday, September 22

The other side of the wall* and *Durango

Pau Ortiz' film follows two Honduran siblings as they struggle at the head of their family whilst their mother is in prison. Durango is a 5 minute film directed by Matt Sukkar.

Saturday, September 23

Ask the sexpert

Sex is a hush-hush topic in India, but while most keep mum about the taboo, others read a 90 year old Mumbai doctor's advice column. Vaishali Sinha's film is full to the brim of hilarity and controversy in equal measure.

Saturday, September 23

Winnie

Following the life of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, French filmmaker Pascale Lamche tackles one of South Africa's most powerful political figures, the woman hailed as 'the mother of the nation.'

Saturday, September 23 ***The road movie* and *Clean hands***

Miro Magazine – September 2017 (3 of 3)

This film from Dmitrii Kalashnikov captures Russian life through the perspective of dash-cams, capturing fires, car chases, violence and accidents on the road.

Clean Hands is a ten minute film from Lauren DeFilippo.

Sunday, September 24

A moon of nickel and ice

From Canadian François Jacob, this documentary looks at the history of Norilsk, a major Russian mining centre in the Siberian Arctic and the people, young and old, who call the town home.

Sunday, September 24

In the name of all Canadians

This compilation of short documentaries was commissioned by Hot Docs to commemorate Canada's sesquicentennial and to tackle the lived experience associated with Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Directors include Ariel Nasr and Aisha Jamal; Patrick Reed and Andréa Schmidt; Karen Chapman; Jean-François Caissy; Janelle & Jérémie Wookey & Annick Marion; Vivian Belik and Jennifer Bowen-Allen. Aisha Jamal will be in attendance for a Q&A after the film.

Sunday, September 24

<http://www.miromagazine.com/film-tv/bertha-dochouse-hot-docs-london/>

A soca king, a design deity and some food for thought: Projections column

Japanese rockers, a John Cho drama and Spielberg's debut all among Toronto filmgoers' options this week.

By **JASON ANDERSON** Special to the Star
Fri., Sept. 1, 2017



CaribbeanTales + T.O. Indie film festivals: Though TIFF will inevitably consume a massive amount of the city's media attention, screen space and hair spray in the next two weeks, there's always some room leftover for other film events. Toronto's annual showcase for films and filmmakers from the Caribbean, the CaribbeanTales International Film Festival launches Sept. 6 with *Machel Montano: Journey of a Soca King*, a new doc about one of Trinidad and Tobago's most successful musicians. Montano will also be among the guests for the event at the Royal and at a repeat on Sept. 7 at Cineplex's Morningside Cinemas. The festival then returns to the Royal for a program of new features, docs, shorts and TV projects that runs Sept. 13-20 before wrapping up with a closing gala at the Scotiabank on Sept. 21.

Meanwhile at the Carlton, the Toronto Independent Film Festival (T.O. Indie for short) tries to lure some viewers east down the street with its slate of micro-budget and no-budget movies. This year's edition includes such notables as *Garage Rockin' Craze*, a suitably scrappy look at Japan's garage-rock scene that screens Sept. 11, and *The Honor Farm*, an American horror-comedy that played SXSW and Fantasia and makes its Toronto premiere on Sept. 15.

Columbus: A new American indie drama that plays a limited run at TIFF Bell Lightbox this weekend, *Columbus* stars the indispensable John Cho as a young man who has to travel to the titular city in Indiana after his estranged architect father falls ill. While stuck there, he makes a connection with the place's impressive array of modernist buildings and a local woman played by *Split*'s Haley Lu Richardson. At the film's Sundance premiere in January, the low-key style of writer-director Kogonada garnered comparisons with such masters of restraint as Yasujiro Ozu, which is high praise indeed. *Columbus* plays the Lightbox Sept. 1-3.

Toronto Star – September 1, 2017 (2 of 2)

REM: Rem Koolhaas Documentary: Revered for his revolutionary ideas about the use of space, Dutch architect and designer Rem Koolhaas is the subject of a new film portrait that opens at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema this weekend. The Seattle Central Library and the Casa da Musica in Porto are two of the buildings with starring roles in the film by Rem's son Tomas Koolhaas.

All the Cities of the North at MDFF: A favourite of cinephiles at the Locarno, New York and Rotterdam film festivals — Cinema Scope magazine put it in its Top Ten for 2016, too — *All the Cities of the North* is an enigmatic first feature by Bosnian filmmaker Dane Komljen. The influence of Godard and Tarkovsky is not hard to spot on his story about taciturn men eking out some kind of existence amid the ruins of an abandoned holiday complex. MDFF presents the film's Toronto premiere at the Royal on Sept. 7.

Food Evolution + Hot & Spicy food films: There are some of us who can never have enough Neil deGrasse Tyson in our lives. The indefatigably enthusiastic and erudite science personality serves as the narrator for Food Evolution*Food Evolution*, a new film that tackles urgent questions about GMOs, food security and other edible and inedible matters and which runs this week at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. Also this weekend as part of Harbourfront Centre's Hot & Spicy Food Festival, the NFB co-presents 20 Foodie Films, a tasty array of shorts and features concerning things you eat and drink. The program of free screenings on Sept. 1-4 at the Marilyn Brewer Community Space includes *The Fruit Hunters* and *Theatre of Life*.

In Brief:

- Something slimy bursts out of John Hurt's chest every day this week thanks to the Carlton's weeklong run for *Alien* Sept. 1-8.

Sneakers and a Walkman: An excerpt from Adam Gopnik's 1980s memoir

'Why, in a city ruled by brutal materialism, did things seem increasingly unreal?'

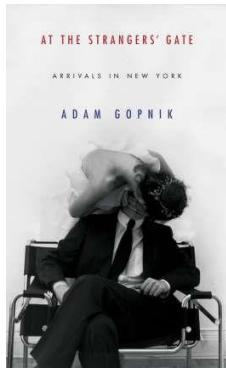
SPECIAL TO NATIONAL POST

September 14, 2017

9:17 AM EDT

Almost forty years on, the eighties in New York seem momentous in the larger life of the world, too. Forty years is the natural gestation time of nostalgia, the interval it takes for a past period to become a lost time, and, sometimes, a golden age. There's a simple reason to explain why. Everybody's shocking first intimation of the setting sun – which takes about forty years to happen – inspires a look back at the sun rising, and its imagined light makes everything from then look golden. Though pop culture is most often performed by the young, the directors and programmers and gatekeepers – the suits who control and create the conditions, who make the calls and choose the players – are, and always have been, largely forty-somethings. The four-decade interval brings us back roughly to a point when they were becoming aware of themselves. Forty years ago is the potently fascinating time when we were just arriving, when our parents were youthful and in love, the Edenic period preceding the fallen state recorded in our actual memories.

Yet the eighties, though once again a set subject, still bear more disapproval than it seems quite fair to load on any past time. Their light shines in retrospect more brassy yellow than truly gold and generous. The time gets summed up in a phrase no one actually said: Greed is good. Greed was, perhaps, more unapologetic at the time than it had ever been before. It was not so much that we experienced capitalism with the gloves off as capitalism without guilt, or, to put it another way, without a conscience. A lot of people got rich and had no shame about it, along the way remaking the city in their image.



Still, the truth is that no period or place belongs to the neat summaries of popular history. Moods don't change so readily; lives aren't lived in such neatly determined packages. We live as much in defiance of the popular themes as in thrall to them. The headlines are of no help when we're making up our own epitaphs. When I think of the eighties I can recall one or two shimmering nights when rich men did rule, but I recall more mornings when having a pair of sneakers and a Walkman seemed to mark one most as a lover of his time. History and experience still are measured out on separate cutting boards. We know that, exactly, by how badly they fit each other. When we put on our period clothes, so to speak, the pants puddle and the waist tugs and the jacket won't quite button up. The adjustments that have to be made are the proof of how off the measurements are in memory.

Still, something did change then. Not human nature, perhaps, something more like the national character. In the eighties in New York all the bounds of money began to loosen. At the same time, most of the certainties that rich people once had about sex and life and marriage and roles that people played came to an end. Most notions of equality dissolved, but so did most notions of gentility. The tandem effect is still baffling to a lot of people, who thought it had all along been the gentility perpetuating the inequalities, instead of the other way round. In 1961, Lenny Bruce was arrested and martyred for saying "cocksucker" in a nightclub in California. By the time Ronald Reagan was President, anyone could say "cocksucker" in any nightclub in California; or, rather, by the time you could say "cocksucker" in any nightclub in California, Ronald Reagan was President. Sorting out the contradictions – or at least living within them tolerably – is part of the work of getting the era.

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Why, in a city ruled by brutal materialism, did things seem increasingly unreal? One answer was that the buying and selling had become so abstract that only unreal signs could represent them. Money had always meant a lot. Now some thought that money meant *everything*, that only money had weight in the world. Others thought that now money *meant* everything. Not just that everything had been pushed aside for the pursuit of money but that even what remained as art or music had no way of getting itself expressed except *through* money – or some fluid that represented it. Money had pushed every other value aside. Money had made itself into art.

I had the sense of another divide taking shape, one harder to see but just as important. The world was getting blowsier and bigger and harder to capture; the counter-life was taking place in smaller and smaller rooms. It took place in stranger and stranger subcultures, in more bizarre and eccentric existences, lived more marginally than before. This made for a kind of broken disjunction between public life and private experience.

Within that divide, we were still an ambitious generation. Ambition seemed admirable and also plausible, in a way that it no longer quite does to many. We accepted an astonishing amount of absurdity in our living conditions and appetites – our *Girls* tiny apartments – in pursuit of our ambitions, but on the whole we expected them to be realized. Today the young live less absurd lives, but have more chastened ambitions. Adequacy seems, bitterly, enough. Watching Lena Dunham's series about twenty-somethings in Brooklyn now, I am startled to see the protagonist, Hannah, getting exactly the same job at the same men's magazine that I had gotten in 1983. But where we saw such jobs – absurdly, but even so – as an obvious step on the ladder to writerly fame, Hannah feels trapped and miserable. The people in the cubicles around hers also seem trapped. There's more room to breathe, but less room to maneuver. We tolerated woeful inadequacy in sure and certain hope, as the Anglican prayer for the dead would have it, of eventual deliverance. When I go to the homes of the twenty-somethings now, I sense that they live on higher floors, but have lower ceilings.

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Adam Gopnik will present At The Strangers' Gate in Toronto at the Hot Docs Cinema on Sept. 26 and at the Kingston Writers Festival on Sept. 27 Excerpted from *At the Strangers' Gate* by Adam Gopnik. Copyright © 2017 Adam Gopnik.

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Review: Rat Film uses rodents as a model for civilization



Baby rats in Theo Anthony's documentary *Rat Film*.

MEMORY

JOHN SEMLEY

17 HOURS AGO SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

.5 out of 4 stars

Our language, beautifully idiomatic as it is, is obsessed with rats. We are gym rats, office rats, lab rats, pack rats, hood rats. We breed, as the song goes, like rats. And we are, as another song goes, like rats in a cage, despite all our rage. We're all of us upwardly mobile professionals trapped in a rat race. We express contempt with "rat fink," "rat face," and we might even call someone, in a cartoonish Cagney scowl, a "dirty rat." The French, too, may be *s'ennuyer comme un rat mort* ("bored as a dead rat"). Human and rodent feel necessarily entwined, not only on the level of civilization, but at the level of metaphor and imagination.

Theo Anthony's low-key astounding essay-doc *Rat Film* doesn't so much disentangle the connections between humans and rats, but rather necessarily re-entangles this relationship. It uses rats – those pesky disease vectors – as a model for civilization. Specifically, *Rat Film* burrows into the grimy rodent-infested underbelly of Baltimore, Md., America's so-called "Charm City."

"There ain't never been a rat problem in Baltimore," says old-timer exterminator Harold Edmond, serving up the film's thesis statement. "It's always been a people problem." Anthony uses Baltimore's rodent microcosm to examine the city's broader racial dynamics, mapping the ways in which density of rat infestations reflect Baltimore's racially segregated zoning bylaws. He also looks at the rat's central role in medical testing at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University, where a rat's easy-to-handle size and short lifespan make it an "ideal model" for studies of aging and growth. Further, "the rat's cultural position as a pest make it less sympathetic of an experimental subject than other animals," coos the chilly voiceover track. Unlike Morgan Spurlock's recent doc *Rats*, Anthony's film complicates the cultural position of the pest instead of merely exploiting it to bait the squeamish and easily grossed-out.

Rat Film is most compelling when it moves out of the history of Baltimore's civic-planning and pest-control schemes and settles on its denizens, both human and rodent. We're presented with

The Globe and Mail – September 22, 2017 (2 of 2)

the film's most poignant and unlikely image when we meet two men in folding chairs, in the middle of a deserted street. They're fishing, with rods, reels and hooks baited with peanut butter, hoping to snare rats. Another vigilante rat-catcher presents himself as a soldier of fortune, laying out his heavy-duty pellet-gun arsenal, eyes wide with excitement. (In its evocation of Baltimore as a kind of man-against-beast frontier town, *Rat Film* evokes the extreme dog-catching sequences of Florent Tillon's underdistributed 2010 doc *Detroit Ville Sauvage*, another arty actuality about an American metropolis in natty crisis.) In another scene, a middle-class family attempts to rat-proof their living room by blocking off entrances with huge HDTV boxes.

In places, Anthony enlivens his more straight-ahead docu-footage with glitchy video-game renderings of Baltimore, repeating the theme of maps overlaying maps like onion skins, building up the historical and social meanings of a city. But instead of distracting, these sojourns into experimentation add to *Rat Film*'s journalistic density. This is a film abounding in information, lively characters and heady, intermittently intoxicating ideas, tangled together like a knotty rat king.

There are points when Anthony's narration, delivered by a Siri-sounding female voiceover artist, swells in its rhapsodic pretension. But even these outbreaks of idea become a part of *Rat Film*'s charm. It's as if Anthony (or his film) were merely thinking aloud, in his most severe, ponderous Werner Herzog (or Chris Marker) voice. It's better, after all, for a film to feel too bloated with ideas than to abjure them altogether. This eager braininess, combined with his capacity for formal invention, distinguish Theo Anthony as a young filmmaker (and thinker) well worth watching.

Rat Film opens on Friday at the Hot Docs Cinema in Toronto, before screening at the Calgary International Film Festival on Friday and Sept. 26.

Original Cin – September 27, 2017 (1 of 2)

'DONKUMENTARY' DO DONKEYS ACT TURNS OUT TO BE REDONKULOUSLY GOOD

September 27, 2017

By Liam Lacey

(RATING: A)

Do Donkeys Act? is not a film about stage-struck animals. Rather, David Redmon and Ashley Sabin's thoughtful playful documentary is an enquiry into what might be called "donkey consciousness." The goal here isn't "ahhhh," but a sense of awe.



Willem Dafoe is this guy's spokes-donkey

Shot over five years in donkey sanctuaries on three continents, including one near Guelph, Ontario, the film is narrated by Willem Dafoe. You might recall, Dafoe played Jesus Christ, a figure symbolically associated with donkeys, in Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

The film was inspired by reading English writer Andy Merrifield's 2010 book, *The Wisdom of Donkeys: Finding Tranquility in a Chaotic World*, the author's chatty account of refreshing his soul while ambling through the vales and bracken of southern France with a donkey one summer. Think of it as *Eat, Bray, Love*.

Redmon and Sabin's film is a more ambitious work, on the edge between poetic and pretension. Dafoe's voice-over narration, aiming for profundity can drift into alliterative gibberish ("Harmonic cacophonies of acoustic communication" or "Darting donkeys flash a voluptuous gestalt."). Of course, no intellectually ambitious donkumentary would be complete without reference to Robert

Original Cin – September 27, 2017 (2 of 2)

Bresson's film, *Au hasard Balthazar* (Balthazar, by chance), featuring a Christ-like abused donkey.

But it's the footage of the donkeys themselves, as they enter the sanctuaries, endure medical procedures, voice their hair-raising hee-haws, and gaze at us through the camera lens — that leave the deepest impression. We can't help but identify with the animals' fear, curiosity and trust.

In an 1980 essay, *Why Look at Animals?* the late John Berger wrote about the historical shift in our relationship with animals, from spirit creatures to pets and food. "To suppose that animals first entered the human imagination as meat or leather or horn is to project a 19th century attitude backwards across the millennia. Animals first entered the imagination as messengers and promises."

In a similar way, *Do Donkeys Act?* is as much an investigation into how we see ourselves as it is about donkeys, who, with their solemn pool-like eyes and antenna-ears, meet our gazes and compel us to reflect on what they see.

Do Donkey's Act? Written and directed by David Redmon and Ashley Sabin. Screening at Toronto's Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema for a one-week run starting Friday, Sept. 29.

This film was reviewed last May at the Hot Docs Film Festival.

Do Donkeys Act? is a remarkable doc

Film about donkey sanctuaries – one in Guelph, Ontario – will make you think about animal consciousness and human responsibility

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

7:05 PM



DO DONKEYS ACT? (David Redmon, Ashley Sabin). 72 minutes. Opens Friday (September 29). See **listing**. Rating: NNNN

This enthralling experimental documentary shines a light on the work of donkey sanctuaries by showing us the experience from the animal's point of view.

David Redmon and Ashley Sabin filmed *Do Donkeys Act?* at sanctuaries in England, Ireland, upstate New York and Guelph, Ontario, illustrating their footage with poetic narration read by Willem Dafoe.

The structure moves from darkness to light, replicating a rescued donkey's arrival at the sanctuary and its eventual integration into life there. By letting us reach our own conclusions about the meanings of various interactions between people and beasts, the film creates space for a contemplation of animal consciousness and human responsibility.

It's remarkable.

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/do-donkeys-act-is-a-remarkable-doc/>

Review: DO DONKEYS ACT? Where Poetry and Empathy Get Curiously Cozy

Kurt Halfyard

CONTRIBUTING WRITER; TORONTO, CANADA (@TRIFLIC)

September 28 2017, 3:00 pm



"Plunge into the intrinsic range of unfamiliar expressions, inside this wild sanctuary that offers a sonorous glimpse into the reveries, melodies, and rhapsodies of a great donkey orchestra."

What is undoubtedly one of the strangest documentaries of 2017, David Redmon and Ashley Sabin's portrait of empathy on the most maligned of beasts, the humble Donkey, plays out like a fly-on-the-tail Frederick Wiseman film. **Do Donkeys Act?** is kind of an inversion of **Titicut Follies** through the needles-eye of **Au Hasard Balthazar**, only ponderously plush with purple prose, narrated with picnic panache by none other than Willem Dafoe.

It takes about 10 minutes or so to get into the rhythm of the film, but once you hang-five on the vibe (bro), the unconventional presentation becomes weirdly addicting. Seventy One minutes feels right, but I could have handled double that.

"Step into their shade."

Filmed with a precision designed to capture maximum empathy, designed slow things down to the point where you can actually take a long look at what is typically an unremarkable beast, the hypnotic hullabaloo of the vociferations and vocal sing-songs of Bobby Peru keeps a curious onlooker on their toes. Is it OK to get a chuckle out of an compassionate endeavour, such as a Donkey sanctuary? That is the provocation here. It's kind of marvellous in a way a movie seems

Screen Anarchy – September 28, 2017 (2 of 2)

to quote Robert Bresson, T.S. Elliot and Dr. Seuss all simultaneously. It achieves a dignity to the animal by way of transcending absurdity.

"Pleasurable palettes stimulate dancing ears."

Self-described, with more than a bit of self-awareness, as ethno-poetic-animal-fiction, **Do Donkeys Act?** was filmed across several Donkey sanctuaries, in Cork, Ireland to Brisbane, Australia, Upstate New York, and Guelph, Canada, over a period of five years. It makes wonderful use of macro lenses, sit-and-stare medium shots, and no-fuss-no-muss industrial farm mise-en-scene. the animals themselves, in the process of healing, recuperation, grooming and dentistry go, as Mark Twain said, briskly, put on no airs, are docile, though opinionated. When it goes to such an avant garde use of the documentary format, come for the cinematography, stay for the balladry and doggerel. Empathy shall be your treasure.

"A brute frenzy of speculative vibrancy. Deferential contact with beasts of burden. Embrace the donkey in the knock-down box. It was, indeed, a hairy massacre."

Cinema. Amen.

Review originally published during Hot Docs in April 2017. The film opens in Toronto, Canada on Friday, September 29 at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

The Globe and Mail – September 29, 2017

Review: Dafoe adds wonderfully offbeat rhythm to doc *Do Donkeys Act?*



An image from the film *Do Donkeys Act?*

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

BARRY HERTZ

SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

It is a well-known maxim in movie-making that any project can be improved by the presence of Willem Dafoe. The eclectic actor's resumé is long and varied, ranging from limp blockbuster to indie curiosity, but it is impossible to find a Dafoe performance that wasn't, at the very least, interesting.

So it was only a matter of time before the Dafoe Maxim made its way into the documentary world, with the actor narrating the action, so to speak, of *Do Donkeys Act?* The slow-burn of a doc looks at four donkey sanctuaries across the world (one in Guelph, Ont.; one in Cork, Ireland; one in upstate New York; and one in Devon, England) to offer a gentle, compassionate view of the misunderstood and oft-abused beast.

The short film – a mere 72 minutes – stretches scenes out for minutes at a time, with no real narrative at play. We simply watch the donkeys eat, walk, sleep. But all the while, Dafoe's meditative dialogue ("A scream not in pity, but as an eternal bray") adds a wonderfully offbeat rhythm to the proceedings. It will either hypnotize you or put you gently to sleep, but it will long stand in the Dafoe pantheon.

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/film-reviews/review-dafoe-adds-wonderfully-offbeat-rhythm-to-doc-do-donkeys-act/article36421631/>



AUTHOR **KAIT FOWLIE**

INSPIRING READING AND WRITING AND STORYTELLING EVENTS THIS FALL

POSTED ON OCTOBER 2, 2017

There's no higher joy than making something with a bunch of like-minded people. Whether it's a poetry reading, a fashion show, a protest or a sewing circle, there is so much possibility in coming together and making something that didn't exist before. That's total magic, really! For the literary types out there, here are some events to check out this fall if you want to push your boundaries and find your words.

Toronto Poetry Slam (Oct. 7, 8 PM, Drake Hotel 1150 Queen St. W)

This is a twice monthly event at the Drake where poets perform their poetry. It's all about pure honesty and really unique entertainment coming from the stage. If words are your thing, being here will fire you up for sure. Also, anyone can get on stage, so check it out if you want to test-drive your written work aloud.

Hot Docs Podcast Festival (Oct. 12 – 15, Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor Street W)

This festival brings podcasts to the stage! See hosts perform their podcasts live and also see panels where hosts discuss the craft of podcasting. Among the beloved podcasts you can see this month: BuzzFeed's *Another Round*, *Modern Love: The Podcast* and *Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids*.

International Festival of Authors (Oct. 19 – 29, Lakeside Terrace, Harbourfront Centre 235 Queens Quay W. \$18 admission)

This eleven-day fest has much writing inspo packed in. Hear readings, author interviews, panel discussions...and this year, check out the fest's first poetry slam in conjunction with the Toronto

She Does the City – October 2, 2017 (2 of 2)

Poetry Project at the Drake (Oct. 20). Maybe it's time to get up on stage, bb? You'll be in company if you do.

Canzine, Festival of Zines and Underground Culture (Oct 21, 12-7 PM, Art Gallery of Ontario)

This is one of my all-time favourite artistic celebrations in Toronto. It's held by *Broken Pencil Magazine* and called a "Festival of Zines and Underground Culture," so it's not just for zinesters but for creative people of all kinds – lovers of words, paper goods, collage or embroidery. This is the place to go to find your creative tribe, IMO.

Wonderful Women Writers Series (Oct 23, 5 – 7 PM, OISE / U of T, 252 Bloor St. W) This is a reading series featuring local women writers, from graphic novelists to newspaper columnists, and their feminist / women-centred fiction. Come, listen and learn, and be inspired.

A Meat Loaf musical, a podcast festival and six other things to see, do, hear and read this week

BY WILL SLOAN AND MARTIN MORROW | OCTOBER 10, 2017



Photograph courtesy of Mirvish

A formidable Meat Loaf musical

1After its hit London run, Jim Steinman's new musical, *Bat Out of Hell*, roars across the pond for every Canadian who's ever sung karaoke to that mini-opera of sweaty teenage lust "Paradise by the Dashboard Light" or sobbed along to the power ballad "Two Out of Three Ain't Bad."

Inspired by Meat Loaf's 1977 album, the show employs classic revved-up rock songs to tell a futuristic fairy tale of adolescent love and rebellion, accented by leather jackets, aviator shades and rumbling motorcycles. Saturday, October 14 to Sunday, December 3. \$29–\$119. Ed Mirvish Theatre.

A week of spooky cinema

2This week, ghouls, goblins and things that go bump in the night get together for the Toronto After Dark Film Festival, Toronto's annual summit of horror and genre cinema. This year's highlights include the opening night gala *My Friend Dahmer* (about going to high school with the infamous killer) and a live appearance by everyone's favourite killer doll, Chucky. Thursday, October 12 to Friday, October 20. \$13.50. *Scotiabank Theatre*.



Photograph courtesy of BuzzFeed

A podcast lover's paradise

3Ten of your favourite podcasts jump out of your earbuds and onto the Hot Docs stage during this four-day festival. Highlights from the expanded lineup include live recordings of the pop-culture phenomenon *Missing Richard Simmons* (about the search for the reclusive fitness guru), *Another Round* (a weekly discussion on culture, race and gender by BuzzFeed staffers Tracy Clayton and Heben Nigatu, shown above) and the dependable Canadian crowd-pleaser *Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids* (a hysterical open mike of goofy Grade 1 assignments and angsty teen diary entries). Thursday, October 12 to Sunday, October 15. From \$15. [Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema](#).

A city-wide improv fest

4With more than 100 performances over nine days, the Big City Improv Festival is Canada's largest improv showcase. This year's highlights include performances by K\$M, Squad Goals Birthday Party, Coko and Daphney, and The Yes Men, plus the premiere of *A Very Specific Place*, a site-specific show by Second City alumni Jan Caruana and Rob Baker at Siberia Vintage. Friday, October 13 to Saturday, October 21. \$12–\$15. *Various venues*.



Photograph courtesy of Mirvish

A quirky book's stellar turn onstage

5 *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* won seven Olivier Awards in London and five Tonys on Broadway. Now the National Theatre's dazzling dramatization of Mark Haddon's best-selling novel arrives in Toronto. Playwright Simon Stephens' clever adaptation takes audiences inside the unique mind of Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old math whiz with an autism spectrum disorder, as he sets out to solve the mysterious murder of a neighbour's dog.

Marianne Elliott (*War Horse*, *Angels in America*) directs, and Joshua Jenkins, star of the show's U.K. tour, reprises his role as Christopher. Tuesday, October 10 to Sunday, November 19. \$38–\$119. *Princess of Wales Theatre*.

Canada's best up-and-coming digital artists

6 This week is your last chance to check out the video art gunning to win the third annual EQ Bank Emerging Digital Artist Award, the first award of its kind in Canada. The exhibition includes a mythical history of the Internet that plays out like a text-based game, a YouTube video mash-up about residential schools and a GIF-based work that experiments with the relationship between images and sounds. Until Thursday, October 12. Free. *121-401 Richmond St. W.*



Photograph by Jenny Jimene

A Canadian indie rock double bill

7Vancouver supergroup the New Pornographers have pumped out infectious power pop for 20 years, tweaking their guitar rock with synths and experimental flourishes to stay fresh. On their new album, *Whiteout Conditions*, they're down a man (songwriter Dan Bejar bowed out to focus on his other project, Destroyer), but duo A. C. Newman and Neko Case more than hold their own with effortless harmonies. The band is backed up by local favourites Born Ruffians, whose tunes dwell in the same indie sphere, albeit with more bite—no one yelps quite like front man Luke Lalonde. Saturday, October 14. \$18.94–\$39.50. Massey Hall.

An all-female music marathon

8Women in Music is one part conference, one part music festival. During the day, workshops, lectures and panels will address women's place in the music industry, while every night is a party, with performances by buzzy acts like Maybe Baby, Pony, Mackenta, Witch Prophet and Falcon Jane. Wednesday, October 11 to Friday, October 13. \$8–\$12. *Drake Underground*.



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Painting by Brendan Yhip

A pop-up gallery on Queen West

9A rustic Queen Street furniture store becomes a pop-up art gallery during Navette's Place, an exhibition of art that depicts marginalized subjects. Portraits by artists Iman Bhatti, Malcolm Emilio, Curtia Wright and Brendan Yhip explore issues of sex, race and identity, while the store's homey decor is meant to convey a sense of belonging. Thursday, October 12 to Sunday, October 15. Free. *Rusty Hinges*.

CHATting WITH JENNA MISENER, CO-HOST OF 'GROWNUPS READ THINGS THEY WROTE AS KIDS'

POSTED ON OCTOBER 10, 2017

Jenna Misener is from Toronto and is the co-host of *Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids*, a hilarious podcast where adults read pieces of writing from their childhood or teenage years to a live audience. She will be presenting her podcast live as part of the Hot Docs Podcast Festival running from October 12th to 15th. Get tickets [here](#).

SDTC: What is your all-time favourite thing you wrote as a kid?

JM: I read my own childhood writing at every *Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids* live event...you'll have to come to a show to hear it!

What is your favourite story that was read on your podcast?

Toni from Newfoundland got up on our stage and read a diary entry about her first-time smoking cigarettes. The details in it were hyper-regional, but the experience was very much universal. Of course she got caught, was grounded, and swore to never do it again. And then signed off the diary entry with "God bless Green Day and Danny Williams."



Jenna Misener (via Twitter)

Why do you think this concept of reading things aloud from our childhoods holds such a strong appeal?

These days we share so much of our lives, especially online. And what we post is often a performance. It's filtered, manicured, coated in a thick veneer. There's something really authentic about connecting with who you used to be – warts and all – and seeing how much you've grown and how far you've come. I think our audiences enjoy connecting with the stories they hear on our stage because they're ultimately connecting to who they used to be.

What gave you the idea to start this podcast? Are you surprised at how it's grown?

It was Christmas 2006, and my boyfriend Dan (now my husband) and I were visiting my parents in Kingsville, Ontario. They asked me to clear out some of the boxes I still had stored in the basement. Going through those boxes, we found my teenaged diary, written in those awkward

She Does the City – October 10, 2017 (2 of 2)

years when I was just on the edge of puberty. With beers in hand, we spent the better part of the afternoon reading diary entries out loud to one another. Some were funny. Some were bittersweet. It was a glimpse into my past and my former self.

We figured lots of other people probably had their childhood and teenage writing kicking around somewhere – in their parents' basements, in boxes in the closet, in storage lockers. So Dan asked his mom to send his childhood schoolwork. Then we booked a night upstairs at the Victory Café (RIP) in Toronto, invited some friends, and crossed our fingers. People showed up. We had some drinks. We laughed. And we've been doing live shows ever since.

We're delighted that after all these years people still show up and share glimpses of their former selves on our stage.

In doing this project, what have you learned about people? About yourself?

When you're growing up it's easy to feel alone, like you're a weirdo, that you're different, that you don't belong. Part of the appeal of *Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids* is realizing that we were all weirdos and we're all a lot more alike than different.

Why seeing a live podcast recording is a lot like attending a favourite band's concert

No longer just the province of early adopters, podcasts have gone mainstream



Getty Images



Special to National Post

October 10, 2017

2:45 PM EDT

By Ann Brocklehurst

The podcast has come of age. No longer just the province of early adopters, podcasts have gone mainstream. They have become a necessity for bored commuters, gym rats and anyone who wants to be entertained while cooking dinner or doing other mindless chores.

Given the devoted fan following podcasts have gathered in recent years, it's hardly surprising that they've also stoked a demand to meet the people behind the microphones. And podcasters have responded by taking their shows on the road, doing live performances and playing festivals like this week's second annual Hot Docs Podcast Festival in Toronto.

Alan Black, co-curator of the festival, which takes place at the eponymous documentary-screening cinema, likens going to see a podcaster to attending a favourite rockstar's concert. "It's a whole different amplified experience," he says, adding that fans feel "very closely tied to the host or presenter. The listening relationship is very personal."

At Hot Docs, which Black describes as a "showcase for the best in audio storytelling," fans will hear from some of the biggest names in the podcasting business. Dan Taberski, for example, who topped the iTunes chart and achieved podcast stardom only to fall precipitously from grace when New York Times writer Amanda Hess called his Missing Richard Simmons podcast a "morally suspect exercise."

Taberski had set out to discover what had become of his former friend Simmons, a fitness guru, who one day just walked away from his life as he knew it and locked himself inside his house. Hess accused Taberski of turning a "loved one's personal crisis into a fun mystery investigation and recorded[ing] it for a hit podcast." At Hot Docs, Taberski will discuss what it was like to become "the subject of a thousand think

pieces." He will also tempt fate by presenting a moment from the show's finale that has never been made public before.

In other high-profile appearances, Jesse Brown, host of the successful Canadaland podcast, will interview and record Daniel Dale, the Toronto Star's Washington correspondent, about what

National Post – October 10, 2017 (2 of 2)

facts mean in the current political climate. And in the perennially popular true crime category, CBC podcasters Connie Walker (Missing and Murdered) and David Ridgen (Someone Knows

Something) will discuss “using crime stories to explore unforgettable characters and important social issues.”

How a once-nerdy audio tool is ushering in a new golden age of radio

How podcasters have made advertising part of the show for their listeners

Their session is one of a number that seems designed to cater not just to fans but to aspiring podcasters. While Black and his colleagues first envisioned the festival as a listener-focused event, they quickly realized there was a “cottage industry of people looking to talk shop, art, craft and the business.”

For those recording their thoughts on cheap mics in echo-free closets and dreaming of being the next big thing, the festival also includes panels about finding your podcast voice and the practical nitty-gritty on recording, editing and distributing your show.

The Hot Docs Podcast Festival runs from October 12–15. For more details, visit hotdocs.ca

<http://nationalpost.com/entertainment/why-seeing-a-live-podcast-recording-is-a-lot-like-attending-a-favourite-bands-concert>

CBC (Metro Morning) – October 12, 2017

Metro Morning with Matt Galloway

Connie Walker on how to make a podcast from a real-life murder

Oct 12, 2017



07:15

Turning the worst thing you can imagine into the best possible story. As the Hot Docs Podcast Festival begins, we speak to the host of CBC's "Missing and Murdered: Who Killed Alberta Williams".

<http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/metro-morning/segment/14366855>

CTV (Your Morning) – October 12, 2017



Why podcasts are rising in popularity

Podcaster Dan Misener and Hot Docs' Sonya William tell us more.

<https://www.ctv.ca/YourMorning/Video/Why-podcasts-are-rising-in-popularity-vid1230201>

8 things to do in Toronto today

Event Newsletter

Toronto's scariest film festival is in town today, alongside some of the world's best podcasters, and a real life version of the Archie gang's favourite diner.

- **Events you might want to check out**

Date

About the Event

Location

- **October 12-13**

Riverdale's Pop's Chock'lit Shoppe Pop-up

Fran's on College is transforming into Archie and the gang's favourite diner just in time for Riverdale's Season 2 premiere. Stop by for a free Betty (old fashioned vanilla) or Veronica (double chocolate) milkshake. The Lakeview will get in on the fun tomorrow.

Fran's Restaurant

- **October 12-14**

Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets In Concert

Witness the magic of Harry Potter live with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra playing along to the film in real time as it's projected onto a screen above them.

Sony Centre

- **October 12-15**

Hot Docs Podcast Festival

Don't miss out on live versions of some of your favourite podcasts. Today's offerings include a panel on finding your voice in podcasting, grownups reading things they wrote as kids, and a live take on the chart-dominating Missing Richard Simmons podcast.

Hot Docs Cinema

<http://www.blogto.com/radar/2017/10/events-toronto-october-12-2017/>

The Social – October 12, 2017

Watch the Latest Episodes



Dan Taberski on The Social
October 12, 2017

Dan Taberski reflects on 'Missing Richard Simmons' for Hot Docs Podcast fest

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Published October 12, 2017 - 4:18pm

Last Updated October 12, 2017 - 5:10pm



TORONTO — The creator of a hit podcast that investigated the health and well-being of Richard Simmons says he has no regrets about the show that was criticized for invading the privacy of the now-reclusive fitness legend.

"Missing Richard Simmons" host Dan Taberski, who is in the lineup for the Hot Docs Podcast Festival that kicked off Thursday, says he still hasn't spoken with the 69-year-old "Sweatin' to the Oldies" star but he believes he's living "the life he chooses to lead right now."

"I've said from the beginning he owes nobody anything and I'm glad that, for whatever reason, he's doing things the way he wants to," Taberski, who hails from Queens, N.Y., said this week in a phone interview.

"I had breakfast with his manager a month or two ago ... and I feel convinced that he's doing OK and that he's living the life he wants."

"Missing Richard Simmons" debuted in February and aimed to find out why the beloved Simmons retreated from public life in 2014.

Taberski was a regular at Simmons's former exercise class Slimmons in Beverly Hills, Calif., and said he considered himself to be a friend of the comical workout enthusiast. He said he was genuinely concerned for Simmons when he seemingly "disappeared."

The Chronicle Herald - October 12, 2017 (2 of 3)

While critics lauded the podcast for being engaging and addictive, some also questioned if it went too far in probing Simmons's personal life for details on his physical and mental health. One columnist in the New York Times called the podcast "morally suspect" while another in the Guardian asked, "Is the hit podcast an elaborate stalking stunt?"

Taberski said he's proud the podcast took Simmons seriously and "didn't treat him like, 'Oh, the guy in the short shorts, he's that funny guy on Letterman, he's the guy that Howard Stern makes fun of, he's the punchline.'"

He said the podcast asks complicated questions like: "What does one person owe another person? What does a celebrity owe people? What is empathy and what is the cost of empathy? What happens when you put your life out there for 40 years and then decide one day to stop doing that?"

"If we're going to ask complicated questions, I think it's OK for people to ask me complicated questions ... and I think that criticism was part of that and I welcomed it," said Taberski, 44.

"I'm really proud of painting a complex picture about a really important person that I think is really special, and I think the people who listened to the podcast got the same thing. So in terms of regrets, no," he added.

"It wasn't perfect, for sure. But we went in eyes wide open, we drew lines about what we would and wouldn't do. We decided that it wasn't going to be an endless quest, that it was going to be six episodes only and that when we were done telling the story of Richard Simmons and putting it out there, that was going to be it. I think we stuck to that and I'm proud of it."

Taberski, who is also a filmmaker and producer who worked for several years on "The Daily Show," said he's now helping write and give editorial advice on an upcoming podcast about the Heaven's Gate cult. He's also working on another podcast that he plans to host and release next year.

This year's Hot Docs Podcast Festival, which runs through Sunday, also includes a session with Andrew Rannells of "Girls," Paul Sun-Hyung Lee of "Kim's Convenience" and Helene Joy of "Murdoch Mysteries" reading essays from "Modern Love: The Podcast," based on the New York Times column.

The Chronicle Herald - October 12, 2017 (3 of 3)

The appetite for live, onstage podcast presentations is "huge," say organizers.

"The landscape has entirely changed over the past year," said Alan Black, managing director of Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema and co-curator of the festival.

"When we did our first iteration, a live podcast was a rarity and it seems like over the past year, podcast festivals are springing up all over the place.

"It's kind of like a rock band — you're not selling your album, you're selling the tour."

Victoria Ahearn, The Canadian Press

Hot Docs Podcast Festival See your favourite podcasts live on stage at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Events / Festivals and Fairs



Event Details

Head to a Hot Docs for a weekend of popular podcasts live on stage. The Hot Docs Podcast Festival celebrates its second year, featuring an expanded four-day lineup of 10 live podcasts, five how-to-podcast panels and a special meet-and-greet.

October 12 - 15, 2017

Schedule

Thursday, October 12th

9:30 am - Beyond the Blood: Turning True Crime Stories into Artful Podcasts Panel

11:30 am - Finding Your Voice: The Art and Craft of Hosting a Podcast Panel

6:30 pm - Missing Richard Simmons

9:30 pm - Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids

Friday, October 13th

9:00 am - Podcasting Essentials: The Tools You Need to Make Your Show Panel

11:00 am - Ready for Takeoff: What it Takes to Launch a Successful New Podcast Panel

1:00 pm - The Decision Makers: Podcast Executives in Conversation Panel

Toronto.com – October 12, 2017 (2 of 2)

6:30 pm - Intercepted

9:30 pm - The Nod

Saturday, October 14th

12:30 pm - The Fridge Light

4:30 pm - Ear Hustle

6:30 pm - Meet and Greet with Radiotopia

9:15 pm - Another Round

Sunday, October 15th

12:30 pm - Modern Love: The Podcast

4:30 pm - The Memory Palace

8:00 pm - CANADALAND

General admission tickets range from \$15-\$29

<http://www.toronto.com/events/hot-docs-podcast-festival/>

Dan Taberski reflects on 'Missing Richard Simmons' for Hot Docs Podcast fest



In this Aug. 10, 2013 file photo, fitness guru Richard Simmons arrives at the Project Angel Food's 2013 Angel Awards in Los Angeles. The creator of a hit podcast that investigated the health and wellbeing of Richard Simmons says he believes the now-reclusive fitness legend is fine and he has no regrets about the show that some critics felt was an invasion of the celebrity's personal life. THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP-Photo by Richard Shotwell/Invision/AP, File

The Canadian Press

Victoria Ahearn

October 12, 2017

3:19 PM EDT

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National Post – October 12, 2017 (2 of 2)

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<http://nationalpost.com/pmn/entertainment-pmn/dan-taberski-reflects-on-missing-richard-simmons-for-hot-docs-podcast-fest>

There is still fun to be had the weekend after Thanksgiving



CITYNEWS | POSTED FRIDAY, OCT 13TH, 2017



It is the weekend after Thanksgiving and you may still be cleaning up after having your family and friends over for festivities. If you are looking to take a break from housework, there are plenty of things to do around Toronto and beyond to keep you entertained.

World Poutine Eating Championship

This festival is all about fries covered in cheese curds and brown gravy– poutine! The dish originated in Quebec in the late 50s, and has since become a Canadian staple. Smoke's Poutinerie 8th annual World Poutine Eating Championship is on this weekend. Described as the largest poutine eating competition and coming in as the second largest eating competition in the globe, officials are promising free poutine, interactive games and live entertainment. There are three competitive categories for participants, which include: amateur, charity challenge and professional. The event takes place Saturday at Yonge-Dundas Square.

Elvis impersonators

If Elvis Presley were alive today, what would he think of his impersonators? I'm sure he would be "all shook up." Elvis tribute artists will be competing at Flaming Star Festival, which is being held at the Crowne Plaza Toronto Airport from Friday to Sunday. The first and second rounds of competition take place on Friday and Saturday, along with open mic sessions. Previous champions will perform in a 'showcase of champions' on Saturday. The finals, including a gospel competition, are on Sunday afternoon. The event is poised to be "a hunk, a hunk of burning love."



Breakfast Television – October 13, 2017 (2 of 2)

Zombie Walk

Halloween is less than three weeks away, but the zombies cannot wait. Their time to walk among the living is now. Zombies will swarm the streets of Kitchener on Saturday afternoon, and you can join them. All you have to do dress up like one. Zombies who are 16 years old or younger need to have written consent from their parents to attend the walk, while teens aged 15 or younger need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is no cost to attend the Zombie Walk, but walkers are asked to bring a non-perishable food item.

Free movies

If you love movies and free things, then this is for you. Cineplex is showing a selection of movies from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturday, and you can watch them for free. Some of the movies include “Trolls” and “Ice Age: Collision Course.” Movie-goers can munch on popcorn, select candy and soft drinks for \$2.50. You can also purchase motivational bracelets for \$2. Doors open at 9 a.m. and the movies start at 9:30 a.m. Tickets are available on a first-come first-serve basis. Money raised from the community day event will go to WE Charity.

2XU Toronto Women’s 8k/5k

An autumn race to keep you in top shape throughout the fall months. This weekend women will be lacing up for the 2XU Toronto Women’s 8K/5K – being put on by GoodLife Fitness for Women. Organizers say this race is also a good way to celebrate another great season of running. Family and friends of runners are being encouraged to come out and support them on race day. Toronto Firefighters will be on hand at the water stations, and there will even be a post-run party with chocolate and fun activities planned. The women’s run is on Saturday at Sunnybrook Park, located at 1132 Leslie St. Runners can pick up their race kits, starting at 7:45 a.m. The 8k run begins at 9 a.m., while the 5k is at 9:15 a.m.

Hot Docs Podcast Festival

The second annual Hot Docs Podcast Festival returns this weekend. People will get the opportunity to see their favourite podcast hosts bring parts of their audio shows to life on stage. Hosts will also be chatting about their craft, and fans who attend will have the opportunity to network with some of them. The festival began on Thursday and runs until Sunday at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema at Bloor and Bathurst streets.

The best events in Toronto this weekend: October 13-15

Our top picks for opera, film, music, podcasts and more

BY **NOW STAFF**

OCTOBER 13, 2017

6:00 AM



Tracy Clayton (left) and Heben Nigatu, hosts of BuzzFeed's Another Round podcast, will appear at the Hot Docs Podcast Festival.

Hot Docs Podcast Festival

Podcasts have morphed into viable touring acts, so much so that Hot Docs launched a festival devoted entirely to the medium last year. The event's second edition happens this weekend and features live versions of popular titles The Memory Palace, Ear Hustle and Canadaland. Other highlights include Naomi Klein, Desmond Cole, MC Narcy and Jeremy Scahill chatting for investigative news site The Intercept's Intercepted podcast; BuzzFeed's Another Round, which includes cultural commentary from Scaachi Koul, Maria Qamar and hosts Tracy Clayton and Heben Nigatu; and actors Andrew Rannells, Paul Sun-Hyung Lee and Hélène Joy reading essays as part of New York Times' Modern Love.

*October 13 to 15. 506 Bloor West. \$17-\$34, all-access pass \$199, conference pass \$64.
hotdocs.ca.*

Not Dead Yet

The DIY punk/hardcore music fest takes over D-Beatstro, Coalition, Sneaky Dee's and other venues. See [feature](#).

October 13-15. \$10-\$30. ticktfly.com.

NOW Magazine – October 13, 2017 (2 of 2)

Bill Murray

The cult actor-turned-viral impresario reads Hemingway, dances the tango and sings with musical accompaniment from Jan Vogler.

October 13. Koerner Hall. 8 pm. \$99 and up. rcmusic.com.

Lawrence Park Art Show

Proceeds benefit VIBE Arts program for kids in underserved areas.

October 13. Opening night party 7-9 pm. \$35. Show October 14-15. Sat noon-4 pm, Sun noon-3 pm, free. lawrenceparkartshow.ca.

Toronto After Dark Film Festival

Cult Of Chucky, the seventh chapter in the Child's Play saga, is our pick for weekend horror viewing at the annual Halloween-appropriate film fest. See [preview](#).

To October 20. Scotiabank Theatre (259 Richmond). torontoafterdark.com.

Arabella

The Canadian Opera Company's first-ever performance of Richard Strauss's opera is excellent. See [review](#).

October 14. (Runs to October 28). \$22-\$350. coc.ca.

The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time

The award-winning adaptation of Mark Haddon's novel about a young man on the autistic spectrum is in previews at the Princess of Wales.

To November 19. 2 and 8 pm. \$38-\$149. 416-872-1212.

Unity Rally To End White Supremacy

Rally and protest march opposing racism. See [feature](#).

October 15. Noon-3 pm. Free. Queens Park. Find event on [Facebook](#).

Revenge and high school hellraisers at Toronto After Dark

Horror fest shares local screens with Indigenous and green offerings.



Kim Ok-bin stars in the woman-centric revenge thriller *The Villainess*. (SUPPLIED PHOTO)

By **JASON ANDERSON** Special to the Star
Fri., Oct. 13, 2017

Toronto After Dark: Even connoisseurs of movie mayhem can still be awed by films that go to ingenious new extremes. Back for its 12th edition, Toronto After Dark will introduce local thrill-seekers to several such jaw-droppers, including a Korean hit that may be this year's benchmark for hyperkinetic action cinema. Screening Oct. 14 at the Scotiabank Theatre, *The Villainess* is a brutal and thrilling woman-centric revenge thriller whose set-pieces range from a first-person-POV opening fight that outdoes *Hardcore Henry* to a swordfight conducted on speeding motorcycles. It's all so bold, stylish and exhilarating that it hardly matters that the storyline is an overcomplicated rehash of *La Femme Nikita*.

Another of the festival's must-sees thanks to its razor-sharp sense of humour, *Tragedy Girls* puts an acerbic spin on its teen-slasher-movie sources, trumping countless *Scream* wannabes in the process. A Calgary-bred director and grad of Ryerson's film school, Tyler MacIntyre delivers the goods with his tale of two high school BFFs who aspire to celebrity-serial-killer status — it plays Oct. 20.

Other noteworthy titles among the festival's Canadian selections are *Defective* (Oct. 17), a gritty reminder about the perils facing societies foolish enough to employ cyborgs as police officers, and *Poor Agnes* (Oct. 18), a Thunder Bay-shot thriller about the twisted relationship between a small-town serial killer and her next victim. As for the many international genre-fest faves making Toronto premieres, the Australian twin-themed mind-bender *Rabbit* (Oct. 15) and *The Endless*, a paranormal mystery by the American team behind *Resolution* and *Spring*, offer less grisly but equally enticing brands of weirdness. Toronto After Dark runs to Oct. 20 at the Scotiabank Theatre.

imagineNATIVE: The world's largest presenter of Indigenous screen content, the imagineNATIVE Film and Media Arts Festival celebrates its 18th year with another busy program of screenings, panels and other events. The strong array of new features and docs begins with *Waru*, a recent TIFF selection comprised of eight interrelated segments, each directed by a different Maori woman filmmaker — it screens as imagineNATIVE's opening night

Toronto Star – October 13, 2017 (2 of 3)

gala at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Oct. 18. The festival runs to Oct. 22 — more highlights in [next week's Projections](#).

Planet in Focus: The third of this week's major fall film fests, Planet in Focus begins its 18th annual edition on Oct. 17 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema with a special tribute to Dr. Roberta Bondar, the doctor, photographer, astronaut and author who has also been named the festival's Canadian Eco Hero this year. Another very admirable woman is the subject of Planet in Focus' opening-night gala film selection. Screening Oct. 19 at the Royal, *Unfractured* is a portrait of Dr. Sandra Steingraber, a scientist and eco-activist in New York State who fights a fierce fight against fracking while contending with health crises in her own family. [Planet in Focus](#) continues to Oct. 22 — see next week's Projections for more picks.

Golden Exits with Alex Ross Perry: Smart, witty and very caustic, the films of Alex Ross Perry have won the young American director a fervent cult of devotees but less of the wider attention he deserves. That said, he's been earning more lately with *Golden Exits*, a typically talk-filled relationship comedy that debuted at Sundance. It stars former Beastie Boy Adam "Ad-Rock" Horowitz and Chloë Sevigny as a bored couple whose marriage is complicated by the arrival of potential paramours played by Emily Browning and Jason Schwartzman. Mary-Louise Parker also stars in the film, which makes its Toronto premiere with Perry in the house in the MDFF Selects series at the Lightbox [on Oct. 17](#).

Sidemen: Long Road to Glory: A new music doc with a limited run at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema this week, *Sidemen: Long Road to Glory* celebrates the achievements and legacies of Pinetop Perkins, Willie "Big Eyes" Smith and Hubert Sumlin, three under-heralded musicians who backed up Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf on some of their most famous recordings. Marc Maron narrates this film portrait by director Scott D. Rosenbaum, which combines interviews with and performances by the trio of bluesmen — all of whom passed away since the movie was shot — with testimonials by the likes of Keith Richards and Bonnie Raitt. [It plays Oct. 16-19](#).

In Brief:

- You still shouldn't say his name three times but *Beetlejuice* plays all week at the Carlton.
- Cineplex locations citywide host free screenings for Community Day on Oct. 14 — selections range from *Trolls* to *Mike & Dave Need Wedding Dates* and \$2 suggested donations go to WE Charity.
- Emerging women directors are the focus for a Share Her Journey edition of Short Cuts at TIFF Bell Lightbox on Oct. 14 — actor-filmmaker Katie Boland and producer Lauren Collins attend to present their new short, *Lolz-ita*.
- On Oct. 18 at the Royal, members of the legendary Italian band Goblin do a post-screening Q&A for a new 4K restoration of *Suspiria*, the group's most revered collaboration with director Dario Argento.

Toronto Star – October 13, 2017 (3 of 3)

- The Toronto South African Film Festival returns for its fourth year with a program of six recent features and docs screening Oct. 14 and 15 at TIFF Bell Lightbox — all proceeds go toward supporting Education Without Borders.

Weekend events in Toronto October 13-15 2017

Event Newsletter

Get our weekly event picks delivered straight to your inbox.

October 13, 2017

Torontonians better bring their appetites this weekend. Between free milkshakes at Pop's, Vegan Oktoberfest, and a poutine eating competition, there's plenty to chow down on. Film buffs also have their work cut out for them with Toronto After Dark in town and free movies this Saturday.

Ongoing events

Date

About the Event

Location

- **October 12-15**

Hot Docs Podcast Festival

Enjoy panels on upping your podcast game plus live shows from podcasts like Canadaland, Another Round, Missing Richard Simmons, and more.

Hot Docs Cinema

Toronto Star – October 18, 2017

Electronica's Petra Glynt noses out mellow rockers The War on Drugs and retro-country's Tyler Childers as concert of the week

Outspoken creator unpacking her latest album, mostly written here, amid one of the busiest concert weekends of the year.



Electrovisual artist Alexandra Mackenzie, alias Petra Glynt, plays the Baby G on Oct. 25. (SUPPLIED PHOTO)

By **CHRIS YOUNG** Special to the Star
Wed., Oct. 18, 2017

Live music highlights for the week of Oct. 19-25

The Paco de Lucia Project

"A la puerta llaman"

An innovator who took flamenco guitar to new and faraway peaks, the late legend Paco de Lucia returns — or at least his final band does, reformed for this tour with de Lucía's nephew Antonio Sanchez sitting in his old chair and multi-Grammy recipient and longtime de Lucia confrère Javier Limon directing. Their SRO landing figures to fire up Koerner Hall well above its warm default setting, the show continues something of a flamenco festival that began last week at the Elgin with the Las Minas festival's touring company — anyone still buzzing from that one will find much to love here (the bonus pick is Tuesday's screening at Hot Docs of Flight of the Guitar: Dreaming of Paco de Lucia, including performance and Q&A with T.O. guitar man Kevin Laliberté). (Saturday, Koerner Hall, 8 p.m.)

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/music/2017/10/18/electronicas-petra-glynt-noses-out-mellow-rockers-the-war-on-drugs-and-retro-countrys-tyler-childers-as-concert-of-the-week.html>

CBC Radio (Unreserved) – October 19, 2017



Unreserved with Rosanna Deerchild



07:05

Land acknowledgement on an international scale

Oct 19, 2017

The Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival now acknowledges land and traditional territories in all their programming.

Land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation that involves a public speaker stating what territory or traditional lands they are currently occupying.

At the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, ahead of every documentary screening or live event, a formal territorial acknowledgement is either read out or projected onto the screen.

"We just thought that this was an important and long overdue gesture to honour the stewardship of Indigenous people whose land we now have the privilege of meeting and working and living on," said Will DiNovi, special programs curator at the theatre.

He said response to the land acknowledgment has been overwhelmingly positive, both from audiences at the theatre and on social media.

"A lot of non-Indigenous folks grew up in Canada without getting good Indigenous history growing up in school," he said. "In the last few years as the national conversation around reconciliation has grown, I've become really conscious of how poorly educated I have been on Indigenous history."



Will DiNovi is the special programs curator at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. (Will DiNovi)

DiNovi said he sees these recognitions as a way to start a conversation that will hopefully lead to a process of self-education.

"We have a platform [at Hot Docs] where we can engage people on important social issues and ideas," he explained. "And right now, I don't think there's a more important issue than this issue of reconciliation."

<http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/unreserved/segment/14451708>

Films about Putin, the planet and the public library on Toronto screens this week

Indigenous film fest and a tribute to one of Asia's most exciting filmmakers among this week's options.



Emma Tremblay in *Juliana and the Medicine Fish*. (SYSTEM / COURTESY OF IMAGINENATIVE)

By **JASON ANDERSON** Special to the Star

Fri., Oct. 20, 2017

ImagineNative: The story of a girl's quest to catch a legendary musky in the waters near her family's troubled resort, *Juliana and the Medicine Fish* is one of many vital new movies by Indigenous creators that play this weekend at the 18th edition of the ImagineNative Film and Media Arts Festival. Directed by Ojibwe filmmaker Jeremy Torrie and starring Emma Tremblay and Adam Beach, the family drama plays its world premiere Oct. 20 at TIFF Bell Lightbox. Among the other highlights of the festival's last three days and nights are *The Witching Hour*, its annual program of genre and comedy shorts, and *Our People Will Be Healed*, the 50th film in 50 years by Alanis Obomsawin. This time she turns her (and our) attention to the efforts of the school at the Norway House Cree Nation in northern Manitoba to foster a wiser approach to education for Indigenous children.

The festival closes Oct. 22 with another of the year's best Canadian docs. Director Marie Clements' strikingly original merger of history lesson and hard-rocking musical, *The Road Forward* uses unusual but highly effective means to tell the story of The Native Voice, the B.C. newspaper that paved the way for generations of Indigenous activists.

Planet in Focus: It's also a big weekend for the city's greenest film fest. The screening slate for the 18th annual Planet in Focus continues at Innis Town Hall with such standouts as *Dream Empire*, director David Borenstein's look at the pretty unfathomable impact of China's unprecedented building boom, and *Dead Donkeys Fear No Hyenas*, a doc by Germany's Joakim Demmer about the corruption and economic exploitation that prevent Ethiopia from feeding its own citizens. Both filmmakers are in town for post-screening Q&As. The festival's closing-night event on Oct. 22 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers includes a tribute to the late Rob Stewart by George Stroumboulopoulos and a screening of *Can You Dig This?*, a portrait of

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urban gardeners in South L.A. One of the film's subjects, Ron Finley, will also accept Planet in Focus' International Eco-Hero Award so come get inspired yourself.

Ex-Libris: The New York Public Library: At a mere 195 minutes in length, the latest by Frederick Wiseman is positively breezy compared to some of the documentary master's recent films. Critics have also been quick to praise *Ex-Libris* as another of Wiseman's illuminating studies of venerable and very complex institutions, in this case New York's library system. Fresh from its premiere at TIFF in September, it returns for a run at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Oct. 20-22.

Johnnie To: Often succeeding in spite of the turbulent and trying conditions for Hong Kong cinema since the 1997 handover, Johnnie To has long been one of East Asia's most exciting and adventurous filmmakers. A new retrospective at TIFF Bell Lightbox, Johnnie To: Expect the Unexpected demonstrates his incredible versatility across a span of movies that include his exhilarating yet elegant 1999 action hit *The Mission*, which opens the series on Oct. 26, as well as more recent marvels like his dazzling 2016 musical *Office*, which plays Oct. 28. The director introduces the screenings on Oct. 26 and 27, including his carte-blanc selection of King Hu's 1967 wuxia classic *Dragon Inn*.

On Putin's Blacklist: What with Russia making daily headlines in the west for all kinds of reasons, the latest doc by Vancouver-based filmmaker Boris Ivanov couldn't be timelier. *On Putin's Blacklist* examines the many ways that Russia's leader has imposed his will on both his citizenry and the world beyond his borders, including the controversial and highly political ban on American adoptions for Russian children and the government's many anti-LGBTQ policies. Ivanov and one of his subjects attend a Q&A at the first Toronto screening at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Oct. 26 — *On Putin's Blacklist* also begins a run at the Kingsway Theatre on Oct. 27.

In Brief:

- Tony Gatlif's 1993 arthouse hit *Latcho Drom* plays the Aga Khan Museum's weekend-long celebration of flamenco on Oct. 21.
- The Toronto Film Society presents the thrilling duo of the 1935 version of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and 1942's *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* at the Carlton on Oct. 22.
- The Toronto Jewish Film Society's Chai Tea and a Movie series returns to Cineplex Empress Walk with the Toronto premiere of the Danish drama *Across the Waters* on Oct. 22.
- A big-screen spinoff for the Toronto-made, vampire-centric web series, *The Carmilla* Movie plays select Cineplex locations on Oct. 26.

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- Director Mike Dowse and actors Dave “Terry” Lawrence and Paul “Deaner” Spence host a free preview of their much-anticipated new Viceland series *FUBAR: Age of Computer* at the Royal on Oct. 26.

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<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/10/20/films-about-putin-the-planet-and-the-public-library-on-toronto-screens-this-week.html>

Daniel Dale talks truth in the Trumpian age on *Canadaland*

And what it's like to be blocked by the President on Twitter

By Jack O. Denton

Published: 10:27 pm, 22 October 2017

Modified: 2:09 am, 23 October 2017



Daniel Dale is blocked on Twitter by the world's most powerful man: the wealthy real estate developer-turned reality TV star-turned President of the United States, Donald Trump. Dale is a soft-spoken but astute journalist covering a politician with a diametrically opposed personality. As the *Toronto Star's* only reporter in Washington, he has the responsibility of being the sole deliverer of DC news to Canada's largest daily — his task is weighty, but it's one that he says is “awesome as a reporter, because you get to pick and choose what story to jump on.”

The Thornhill native made the trip back to the city for a taping of Jesse Brown's hit media criticism podcast *Canadaland*, recorded live as part of the Hot Docs Podcast Festival. Before taping, Dale took some time to sit down for an interview with *The Varsity*.

Tackling Trump via Twitter

As soon as he wakes up in Washington DC — even before he puts his glasses on — Dale checks Twitter. “I wake up at seven something, and he's usually tweeted by seven, and it's like, ‘Has he already made a new claim? Am I already behind waking up at like 7:15 in the morning?’” he says. “Which is ridiculous.”

Twitter as a medium has, in a way, become a hallmark of Dale's journalism and earned him a bit of a cult following, mostly due to his long-running, occasionally droll fact-checking of Trump.

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Pointing out inaccuracies ranging from incorrect tax rates to utter lies — like the time Trump lied about getting a congratulatory call from the leaders of the Boy Scouts — Dale's feed is one I would recommend following.

And now it's gotten him in hot water: blocked by the President of the United States. "I think it's hilarious," Dale says. "My editors and people I know were kind of outraged by it — and, in principle, I think it is troubling that a powerful politician would try and deny information to a journalist in even the most minor way." Dale calls the block a "hilarious inconvenience," though also revealing: "It tells us something about this man, this president, that even someone pointing out his inaccuracies on Twitter is enough that he doesn't want to look at it."

Twitter has become what many believe to be an invaluable tool in the journalist's toolkit. But, as Dale warns, "Twitter is awful in an awful number of ways." He says it can be bad for a journalist's mental health, and that "it can wear you down if you spend too much time in your mentions."

From Ford to... this?

Dale covered City Hall in the Rob Ford years — no easy task, and one that he barely escaped unscathed. Once, the former mayor chased and cornered him in a park near the mayor's house with a raised fist. The wake of this incident would lead Dale to serve the mayor a libel notice.

The reporter says that there are "a lot of similarities" between Trump and Ford, including "the way that they have harnessed anti-elite sentiment" despite both characters' elite status, and being "loudly, angrily anti-media in ways that their respective institutions hadn't previously seen."

He points out an interesting nuance in the difference between the Ford and Trump populisms: in some ways, Ford "sought to include members of diverse communities and minorities, whereas Trump is solely focused on white people."

Dale is quick to note, though, that the "frequency and the needlessness of the dishonesty" from Trump has surpassed the level of outrageousness from Ford.

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Given that he's covered two brash, anti-media politicians, I asked Dale whether he thinks that the relationship between journalists and politicians should be mutually antagonistic. Not quite, he says. "It's sort of one step calmer than that. It necessarily has to be a skeptical relationship: you're not there to be their friends, but that doesn't mean you're there to be their enemies, either."

It's hard to escape covering Trump in today's America. Dale was down in DC for the end of the Obama years, "covering America more broadly." He thinks that if Hillary Clinton had won, his job "would be super different."

"My job is almost exclusively covering Trump," Dale says. "He's all anyone wants to read about right now."

On *Canadaland*

Dale's appearance on *Canadaland* was characteristic of the deconstructive, conversational, and occasionally quirky show that fans know and love. The Hot Docs theatre was packed as the bass-fuelled intro played and Dale joined Brown on the stage.

I won't ruin the podcast for those of you who are listeners, but suffice it to say that Brown and Dale covered similar material to what Dale and I discussed, from fact-checking to fun with the Ford family. The show also included a few curveballs from Brown, who dug up some bylines and free-speech activism work from Dale's days at the *Guelph Mercury* — may it rest in peace — and at York University.

Canadaland, in the midst of a fundraising push, had a new venture being showcased at the live show: a beer called Canadaland Sour. Audience members who Tweeted #canadalandsour were promised a free beer after the show on the sidewalk outside the cinema.

"This is legal, I'm told," Brown said, half-joking.

Unfortunately, the line outside the cinema was more than the coolers were equipped for and I didn't get my Canadaland Sour — but that didn't sour the experience in the slightest.

***Modern Love* brings intimacy to an audience**

Producer Amory Sivertson says the podcast explores "what it means to be a human being"

By [Katie MacIntosh](#)

Published: 10:31 pm, 22 October 2017

under [Arts & Culture](#)

Tags: [Hot Docs Podcast Festival](#)

From left: Rannells, Joy, and Lee. PHOTO COURTESY OF HOTDOCS



A woman who's in the best relationship of her life, only to discover she's been taken for a ride by a Craigslist conman. A husband's "birth plan" that goes disregarded when his wife goes into labour prematurely. A young man who ignores his ringing cellphone in favour of hooking up with a stranger, only to wake up to an inbox full of voicemails informing him that his father has slipped into a coma.

All these are pieces from the archives of *The New York Times*' "Modern Love" column, a fixture in the paper's Sunday edition since October 2004. These were also the three pieces presented by its audible counterpart *Modern Love: The Podcast* at this year's Hot Docs Podcast Festival.

The festival, held at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, featured live performances from a number of podcasts, including other fan favourites like *Grownups Read Things They Wrote As Kids* and *The Nod*, along with Q&As and panel discussions with the people behind them. While *Modern Love*'s title may imply a focus on romantic love, the personal essays that appear both in the column and on the podcast are actually more loosely organized around the theme of "being a person."

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“I think *Modern Love* is really a way to further your education about what it means to be a human being,” said podcast producer Amory Sivertson in an interview with *The Varsity*. “No matter who we are or where we come from, or what our circumstances are, we all have a deep relationship of some sort ... These stories are universal.”

Sivertson was joined on the Hot Docs stage by executive producer Iris Adler, sound designer John Perotti, and the column’s editor, Daniel Jones, to talk about the podcast’s production. As much as the stories themselves speak to the love and loss we all face in ordinary life, the voices that bring them to life are not quite average: the podcast has featured prolific talents such as Colin Farrell, Judd Apatow, and Jake Gyllenhaal.

The Toronto panel was interspersed with performances and boasted a two-thirds Canadian cast: *Murdoch Mysteries*’ Hélène Joy, *Kim’s Convenience*’s Paul Sun-Hyung Lee, and *Girls* star Andrew Rannells, reading his own essay for the column.

The simplicity of the podcast’s concept — ‘actor reads essay’ — belies the amount of work that goes into each episode. The difficulty of transmuting written pieces into engaging audio was a topic that came up repeatedly during the discussion: from the selection of essays to finding actors that suit them to nailing the sound design. Production is a painstaking process.

And yet *Modern Love: The Podcast* never feels clichéd, trite, or melodramatic; it is clever, poignant, and intimate. Sometimes it makes you laugh; sometimes it makes you feel like someone has taken a jackhammer to your heart. All of which is to say, it is very good. If you don’t trust me, trust its popularity: in its first month alone, the podcast saw over 1.4 million downloads. “I’m afraid the podcast is better than the column,” joked Jones at the event.

He’s not wrong to be a bit concerned. As lovely as the column is, “Modern Love”’s audio incarnation is truly spellbinding. Much of this can be chalked up to the sound design.

The challenge, Perotti explained, is using sound to create a mood which best captures the story. Sometimes music is a tool to bring more energy to a scene when monologue alone falls short; sometimes it’s used to “tamp down” the drama when it borders on being too much.

That kind of attention to detail — which has entailed researching exactly how Andrew Rannells’ Nokia cell ringtone sounded, recording background noise from a specific location, digging

The Varsity – October 22, 2017 (3 of 3)

through sound banks to find just the right sound— seeps into every aspect of the podcast's production, to the point that the writers of the original pieces are also contacted and interviewed for each episode to get their take on the stories and to find out how their lives have changed since they took place.

"Hearing something out loud is so different from reading something on a page," said Sivertson. "I see this as really breathing a different kind of life into these pieces by giving an actual voice to them."

As the column continues to receive a bottomless pit of submissions – over 8,000 a year for 52 slots, according to Jones – there is no shortage of eligible stories for them to tell. Some of the newer additions to the column focus on issues that were formerly taboo, for example, relationships in the transgender community, which has opened up these topics to the podcast as well.

"We want to have a diverse range of voices, and tell a diverse range of stories," said Sivertson. "I feel like sometimes the only thing that we can agree on is that there's nothing more powerful than loving and being loved."

— *With files from Reut Cohen*

HIP HOP ARTIST NARCY RAPS ABOUT YEMEN, NETFLIX, AND ERIK PRINCE

Elise Swain

October 22 2017, 8:45 a.m.

LAST WEEK IN TORONTO, the Iraqi-Canadian rapper Yassin “Narcy” Alsalman joined Jeremy Scahill, Desmond Cole, and Naomi Klein for a live taping of Intercepted at the Hot Docs Podcast Festival, where he performed his new spoken word poem, “We Are on the Verge.” The last time Narcy joined Intercepted, it was to premiere the song, “Fake News,” in which Steve Bannon’s Muslim ban was rapped about in auto-tune.

The instant accessibility to the constant news-cycle anxiety hit a breaking point for Narcy during the few weeks in September when Hurricanes Irma, Maria, and Jose decimated many island nations, including Puerto Rico, after which Trump importantly explained that aid to Puerto Rico is difficult because “an island” is “in the middle of an ocean.” In response to Trump, Narcy writes he “direct quoted from assholes” for the opening line of “Verge.” He continued, “I think it flew over people’s heads, which was good — it was subtle.”

“Verge” lyrics nod to the unimaginable horrors in the decimation-by-bombing campaigns in Yemen, the appalling ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and how collectively we escape into our panacea of screens and Netflix. The piece resonates as a personal catharsis of not being able to consume as much news as is accessible, and feeling overwhelmed. Narcy says conversations with friends lead to being on the verge of something: “Being on the verge of the world ending, entire planetary natural disaster, and a political meltdown all over the world,” Yet, Narcy sees hope in this crescendo of panic. “This could be an opportunity to use this moment of a breaking point to use it in a positive way, as opposed to feeling like it could destroy us.”

Narcy performs “Free” for Intercepted during the Hot Docs Podcast Festival in Toronto, Canada.

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“‘Free’ is the what if,” Narcy says. “If we were to deal with all these issues in a positive and organic way, then maybe we could look at each other as finally being free of any the shackles that hold us back in society. That’s why I did those two songs on the show.”

Narcy ended his performance with a track tentatively titled, “I Know” which we can expect on his next album to be released early next year. The album will have more of a pop structure, he says, while maintaining his hard-hitting political lyrics. “I want people to relate to this record. I have a song about my children. I have a song about enemies. I have a song about friends. It’s the spectrum of love and hate. It’s dance-y. It’s a little more love-y.”

When asked for closing comments on the Intercepted live show, Narcy said:

“What we’re all realizing is that we view nations as separate histories and nations get deleted as though their history is being deleted, and not ours. But really, whether you take the example of Iraq or any other country, it’s world history that has been deleted and our children will inevitably suffer from that. And I think what’s happening now in the world and the way power is being exercised and called out and — they’re just afraid because the so-called minority is now the majority and they can’t win. We’re bigger than everybody.”

His message echoes the mission statement of The Medium, a multimedia artist collective he co-founded and runs while performing, recording, and teaching part-time at Concordia University where he has a class called “Beats, Rhymes, and Life.” In the last year, Narcy released a self-directed video for Chobi Bryant and was approached by Talib Kweli to direct two upcoming music videos after the success of his directorial debut, “R.E.D.” from A Tribe Called Red ft. Yasiin Bey, which won the 2017 “Video of the Year” Juno award.

Toronto pays tribute to Gord Downie

Events include a public sing-along and a screening of Long Time Running

BY **MICHELLE DA SILVA**

OCTOBER 23, 2017

12:55 PM



Roy Thomson Hall | Jag Gundu

Canadians lost an icon when Tragically Hip singer, poet and advocate **Gord Downie died on October 17.**

Since then, tributes across the country have taken place, include a Hip sing-along at a Toronto park and a moment of silence at WE Day in Vancouver.

We've rounded up some of the latest tributes to Downie in Toronto as well as some upcoming events. If you have a Gord Downie tribute event coming up, email or comment below.

Toronto Sings For Gord

Join community singing ensemble Choir! Choir! Choir! at Nathan Phillips Square on October 24 for a Tragically Hip sing-along. Song lyrics will be posted to the group's Facebook page on Monday, and singing begins Tuesday at 8 pm. A donation of \$5 to the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund is suggested. See **website** for details.

C!C!C! Sings Gord Downie's The Stranger

If you miss the public event at Nathan Phillips Square on Tuesday, a second opportunity to sing in honour of Downie takes place the following night on October 25. Choir! Choir! Choir! gathers at Clintons (693 Bloor West) for their usual weekly sing-along to tackle Downie's The Stranger,

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the lead song off his 2016 album, *The Secret Path*. Cover is \$5 and singing starts at 8 pm. See [website](#) for details.

Long Time Running at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Filmmakers Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier documented the Tragically Hip's final tour across Canada in 2016 in support of their album, *Man Machine Poem*. The result is a 96-minute documentary that not only captures the magic of the shows but the band's emotional journey as well. NOW film critic Norman Wilner described **Long Time Running** as "deeply sad and positively triumphant. It's everything we need it to be." See it this Thursday (October 26) at 8:45 pm at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema (506 Bloor West). See [website](#) for details.

Original Cin – October 24, 2017 (1 of 3)

Q&A: DOC DIRECTOR SAYS RUSSIAN EMIGRES FEAR PUTIN CAN 'GET THEM' HERE

October 24, 2017

At the recent Vancouver International Film Festival, attendance was high for the documentary *On Putin's Blacklist*, the story of how Russian president Vladimir Putin used anti-Western sentiment with (literally) extreme prejudice to consolidate power.

Only one audience was missing – Russian-Canadians.

"They weren't there. They were afraid," Vancouver-based director Boris Ivanov says matter-of-factly. "I think there were two Russians at one screening I was at."

The film connects Putin's exploitation and banning of foreign adoptions of Russian children, anti-LGBT policies, exploitation of the Church, control of the courts and subjugation of the Duma (Russian parliament) to show how he's created a cult of personality that Ivanov says could keep him in power for the next 20 years. And it introduces us to activists now living in the West and adoptive parents, some of whom were refused at the last minute.

Ivanov, now a Canadian citizen, spoke to Original-Cin's Jim Slotek prior to the Toronto opening of *On Putin's Blacklist*.

ORIGINAL CIN: You show what Russians have to fear from Putin, but what do we in the West have to fear? Is he unstable?

IVANOV: "I don't think he's unstable. He's a Stalin. But fear is very important. What was difficult for me to understand was that Russians who'd become American citizens were afraid to talk to me because 'Putin is going to get them.'"

"And this is fear just because of the news and things. I don't think fear ever leads to anything good. I think we have to get past this whole concept of fear. I think Donald Trump got elected because of fear. A lot of things that are happening in the world right now are because of fear."

"So, I tried to profile fearless people. Justin (Romanov, a young Russian gay activist now living in Toronto) is a fearless person. So is Ilya (Ponomarev, the only Duma member to vote against the Russian annexation of Crimea, and who is now living in exile in Ukraine). So is Masha (Gessen, a Russian journalist and anti-Putin critic, who fled after threats of having her children taken away because of her same-sex marriage). So is Pussy Riot."

"And so are a lot of younger Russians now don't have this fear. They are willing to stand up for who they are."

OC: Do you think he's an imperialist, an expansionist?

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IVANOV: "I don't know, necessarily. I think what happened in the '90s is that when the Soviet Union fell apart, everybody kind of dismissed Russia as, 'Oh we don't have to worry about them anymore. We can do whatever we want to do without listening to their opinions.'

"Their economy collapsed and Russians became like, 'Wait, we have to protect ourselves.' It was more protectionist than expansionist."

OC: So, Putin's message was, "Let's make Russia great again."

IVANOV: "Exactly. My example is that when we had the Olympics (Winter Games) in Vancouver, the Russian team did badly and Putin was upset. So, it's no surprise that in 2014, the Olympics in Sochi, he wanted a guarantee that Russian athletes were going to win. So a whole system of doping and things was set up because there was not going to have another Olympics like Vancouver.

"The Olympics made Putin more popular than ever. It was a great success. The whole world came to Russia, and if it didn't go off successfully, maybe things would be different now, who can say?"

OC: Putin's campaign against foreign adoptions is a big part of the movie. That's a very visceral issue.

IVANOV: "I felt like it's exploiting the defenceless. I understand when people fight for power or money. But when you're using absolutely defenceless children who have nothing, no parents to protect them. And you use that for your political gains, that to me is the most heartless."

OC: The symbolism of adoption seems to be, 'Our enemies have to provide for our children because we can't do it ourselves.'

IVANOV: "Right. I believe in the Republic of Georgia, (Eduard) Shevardnadze's wife onetime said, 'We'd prefer our children to die on our own soil than to live somewhere else.'

"The whole film is about various anti-Western rhetoric. Part of it is adoptions, part of it is anti-LGBT, NGOs (non-governmental organizations, which Putin regards as CIA fronts), anything that's viewed as Western influence is the enemy."

OC: During the Soviet years at least, the impression was that Russians wanted Western things, like blue jeans.

IVANOV: "I think there's still a desire to be Western for many Russians. Putin is not anti-Europe, he's anti-'Gay-Rope,' this concept of gay-Europe which is not the true Europe of conservatism and Christianity. It's the modern Europe of freedom and Muslims and things like that he doesn't believe in. He gives it a nickname for propaganda purposes.

Original Cin – October 24, 2017 (3 of 3)

“So, I think Russians still want to be European, but many don’t quite understand what that involves is giving people freedom to choose what they want to be or who they are.”

OC: You must be very interested in the results of the probe on Russian interference in the U.S. election.

IVANOV: “It will be interesting. Putin was very upset because he thought Americans were trying to influence the election in 2011 when he was elected president. He thought all the NGOs and everybody else was financed by the CIA, and they were causing all these uprisings and people demonstrating, that it was not internal, it was external.

“At that time, the Democrats were in power and he’s not friends with Hillary Clinton and the Democrats at all. So, him meddling is like him paying back for what he feels happened in his country with all the unrest.

“What’s interesting about Trump is that he’s borrowing a lot of things from Putin. Controlling media, confusing media, saying things you don’t know are true anymore. It becomes much easier to manipulate people. Sometimes he says this, he says that, nobody really knows what happened. He says all these things, and at some point, people just turn off. And that’s when he can get control because nobody’s listening anymore.”

OC: And then there’s the manipulation of the Church.

IVANOV: “Of course, that has gone on a long time in Russia. The Czar used the Church.”

OC: The Czar made himself head of the Church. It kind of lost its identity in Russia when he was overthrown.

IVANOV: “You know what’s interesting is this year is 100 years since the Russian Revolution (on November 7). And in Russia, they’re not celebrating it. Putin does not want to celebrate revolutions.”

On Putin's Blacklist. Directed by Boris Ivanov. Debuts Thursday, October 26th at the Ted Rogers Hot Docs Cinema. Opens Friday, October 27 at the Kingsway.

<https://www.original-cin.ca/posts/2017/10/24/qa-doc-director-says-russian-emigres-fear-putin-can-get-them-here>

Review: 'Whose Streets?'

Doc gives intimate perspective from the front lines of protests in Ferguson, Missouri

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published October 31st, 2017 [0 Comments](#)



Courtesy Magnolia Pictures

Whose Streets?

(USA, 90 min.)

Dir. Sabaah Folayan, Damon Davis

Whose Streets? is a significant fusion of citizen journalism and documentary filmmaking.

Director Sabaah Folayan and co-director Damon Davis provide a courageous and eye-opening account of the 2014 events in Ferguson, Missouri following the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old Black male, by Darren Wilson, a 28-year-old white police officer armed with a handgun and the department's pervasive history of institutionalized racism. *Whose Streets?* gives footage from the thick of the protests as Ferguson residents rallied to draw attention to the rampant violence and oppression of Black people in the community, which ultimately grew into the Black Lives Matter movement as fellow Black Americans across the country stood up to the unacceptable fatal shootings of countless unarmed Black men by police. The film spotlights perspectives of the story that mainstream news outlets omitted and it provides an incendiary point of view on the experience through the eyes of Americans who lived it.

Whose Streets? presents a range of emotional footage captured through a mix of professional cameras, consumer grade handheld devices, and mobile phones. This collage is rough, shaky, and grainy. Sometimes it's disorienting and confusing, but it's consistently urgent and immediate. The rough and tumble nature of the footage gives a sense of the tension in the area and the simmering urge for change.

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Whose Streets? puts audiences on the ground in the thick of the action alongside protestors and everyday revolutionaries such as Brittany Ferrell, David Whitt, Tef Poe, Kayla Reed, and Tory Russell who act as guides to the aftermath of Michael Brown's shooting. They bring us to the scene of the crime where teddy bears, flowers, and farewell cards mark the life of a boy taken too soon. The constant police presence in the area is unnerving, as is the relatively safe and normal atmosphere filled with families and kids. This site could be any neighbourhood where kids play in the streets, so the implications of Brown's death are severe. If America's youths are safe in their backyards, what kind future can they expect?

The doc follows these protagonists as they rally in peaceful protests to demand answers. As their numbers grow, so too does the police presence, but the range of footage that Folayan and Davis presents runs counter to the narrative of the swelling angry mob depicted on the evening news. While there are incidents of violence and looting, the documentary evidence captured in close proximity shows a disproportionate police presence and a tense atmosphere that was simply waiting for a spark to "justify" an offensive move against the protestors. The gap between the images *Whose Streets?* presents, thoughtfully conveyed by the aesthetic divides between camera grades and citizen journalists, speaks to the racial bias of news media and officers of the law alike. It's hard not to feel disgust when property receives a description far more humane and sympathetic than the people fighting for their lives do. Conveyed with the same collective spirit and alternative voice as docs like *The Square* or *Winter on Fire*, *Whose Streets?* is a powerful point of view into a vital fight for change.

The intimate access to the subjects also shows the personal struggles they experience for actively fighting against institutionalized racism and systemic bias. Ferrell, for example, faces felony charges by the film's end for striking the car of a woman who nearly drove over Ferrell and her fellow protestors. The dramatic reading of the police report draws out descriptions of "tribal chanting" from an angry and animalistic mob. The account blatantly dehumanizes the accused, but, more significantly, illustrates the perceptions of Blacks by whites thanks to America's long history of racism. The film is very compelling as it focuses on a handful of protagonists on the front lines of the Black Lives Matter movement. Folayan and Davis give a voice to these individuals and the greater movement that had to shout from the sidelines to be heard—and still does.

Whose Streets? screens at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Nov. 1 and 2 as part of the Doc Soup series. Co-producer Chris Renteria in attendance for post-screening Q&As at all screenings.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-whose-streets>

Q&A: THE DOC DINA IS A LOVE STORY FIRST, A DIAGNOSIS SECOND

November 2, 2017

Directors Dan Sickles and Antonio Santini want to disabuse people of the notion that their documentary Dina is, “an Asperger romance.”

The film - which won the Grand Jury doc prize at Sundance (and features guitar soundtrack music by actor Michael Cera) - follows the days leading up to the wedding of a couple in suburban Philadelphia, Dina Buno and Scott Levin. That they have quirks and tics that can be categorized medically is secondary to their often humourously-contrasting personalities.

Dina - whom Sickles has known most his life – is a previous widow and a survivor of an abusive relationship. She has a strong personality and opinions.

Levin (who works as a Wal-Mart greeter) is quieter, expressing himself in bursts of trivia and song lyrics. But he has a quirkier side too, booking a honeymoon suite with a martini-glass Jacuzzi, the most memorable visual in the movie.



Scott Levin and Dina Buno in the documentary Dina

“We didn’t want to frame Dina’s identity and her existence by any diagnosis,” Sickles says.

“We’re using people-first language, which is very important to people from this community. There is very big difference between saying, ‘There’s an autistic person,’ versus ‘Oh, that’s a person who’s on the spectrum or neuro-diverse.’

“We wanted to honour their personhood, and show two people with all their complexities.”

Original Cin – November 2, 2017 (2 of 4)

Sickles and Antonio spoke to Original-Cin's Jim Slotek in advance of Dina's run Nov. 3 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in Toronto, the Hyland in London and the Mayfair in Ottawa.

ORIGINAL-CIN: First of all, where do I get one of those martini-glass Jacuzzis?

SICKLES: (Both laugh) "They're pretty hard to come by. You may have to take a trip to the Poconos."

OC: It's hard for anybody to be watched. How did Dina and Scott take to having a camera following them around? Did they ever object?

SANTINI: "There is one scene at the beginning of the movie where she's drinking coffee and she spills it and the way it's cut it's kind of comedic. But for Dina at first, because she has a tic that connects to her Tourette's diagnosis (Buno has what her mother describes as "a smorgasbord" of conditions). She was scared that someone was going to make fun of her.

"She's 50 now, and throughout the years growing up, she has encountered a lot of criticism because of the way she behaves and her diagnosis. The parts where her diagnosis was more visible, those were harder for her."

SICKLES: "For all the quote-unquote taboo subject matter that's in the film, the only thing that Scott is embarrassed about is when he's off-key or off-rhythm sometimes when he's singing in the film."

OC: Let's talk about the taboos. You follow Dina and Scott into the bedroom, which is, I think, where most documentaries would stop.

SICKLES: "I will say this isn't the first bedroom we've ever shot in. Our first film (Mala Mala, about transgender people in Puerto Rico) included the bedrooms of two of our characters. I don't know how atypical that is. Maybe we can pat ourselves on the back for creating a space where people feel that they can be vulnerable and not be taken advantage of."

OC: Given that you, Dan, have known Dina all your life, it strikes me that a friendship was at stake if anything in this movie went wrong.

Original Cin – November 2, 2017 (3 of 4)

"I guess I hadn't considered it in that way. The aim was always to dignify and validate Dina's experience. She's a collaborator with us even now for the (movie's release). She's an integral part of our team. And all the things we were able to capture, that came from hours of discussions with Scott and Dina.

"Dina, to date, was the most mature person we've worked with in this capacity. She understands that there are things in the film that don't necessarily make her look very glamorous, but they are necessary to communicate her complexity.

"Early on, Antonio and I did a three-day master interview with Dina, just to sort of follow her whole history, to ask the questions we wanted to ask and to see how far we could take each other.

"And there was one exchange we were having with her, about how she perceives the difference to be between her community and neuro-typical people - what we might call 'normal' quote-unquote.

"And, finally, she said, 'Well the difference is you guys lie.' And when she said that, it was kind of like 'Oh, whoa.' To me it's pretty true. I think neuro-typical people are animals of evasion and deception and mask-wearing.

"And Dina's not. She's very transparent. She says what she means and she means what she says. That not only makes her an extraordinary person, but as a documentary subject and a collaborator that's sort of the ideal."

OC: Given all the years you've known her, what inspired you to make the movie now?

SICKLES: "The film picks up at this particular place in time, but that doesn't include, like, the story of how in Third Grade she taught herself how to read after a teacher told her she'd never be able to. That doesn't include the story of her getting her teachers assistant certificate so she could get a job. It doesn't include her teaching herself how to walk again after the stabbing (from her now-jailed ex) and after being in a coma for three days, when the doctors told her she'd probably be paralyzed from the waist down.

Original Cin – November 2, 2017 (4 of 4)

“So, when Dina told us she was getting married again, I was like, ‘Well, this is something worth investigation. How can somebody find that desire to be in a relationship after all of this?’ It was like lightning striking at the right place and time.”

OC: Given all that, were you ever intent on telling her whole story, and not just the wedding?

SANTINI: “Dan and I aren’t always trying to make pure documentaries or tell whole histories. With our first movie, Mala Mala, there were nine individuals that identified as trans. But we wanted people to understand that this wasn’t Trans 101. You weren’t going to come in and we were going to teach you everything you needed to know about being trans.”

OC: I’m sure it meant a lot to you guys, but what did it mean to Dina to win that award at Sundance?

SICKLES: “I think, to be honest, the prize could have come from anywhere and I think Dina would appreciate it just the same.

“It’s kind of overwhelming for her, because for so much of her life, she’s been saying ‘Hey listen to me, listen to me, I have things to say.’ And now for the first time in both their lives, people are lending them dignity and respect they’ve never really seen before.”

Toronto Star – November 3, 2017

Killing of a Sacred Deer a strange story of payback, plus mini-reviews of Novitiate, God's Own Country and more

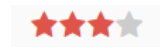
New to cinemas on Friday: The Killing of a Sacred Deer, Novitiate, God's Own Country and Dina, plus Ingrid Goes West on DVD.

By **BRUCE DEMARA** Entertainment Reporter

PETER HOWELL Movie Critic

Fri., Nov. 3, 2017

Dina



Documentary featuring Dina Buno and Scott Levin. Directed by Antonio Santini and Dan Sickles. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 101 minutes. PG

It's an unconventional love story with a little twist.

Filmmakers Antonio Santini and Dan Sickles follow the evolving relationship of Dina and Scott, two people living with development disabilities, as they move from engagement to marriage.

The story opens with Dina in the dentist's chair, indicative of what follows — everyday events in otherwise unremarkable lives.

One of the more interesting aspects of their story is Scott's reluctance to engage in intimacy, despite receiving well-known beginners' manual, *The Joy of Sex*.

"I could learn," Scott muses, and yet it never quite happens, leaving Dina insecure and frustrated.

Another element injected into the story: Dina's past relationships, including one with a man who stabs her in a moment of a jealousy. It's jarring and yet an integral part of Dina's life.

The camerawork by director of photography Adam Uhl is rather washed out, adding a sort of raw, amateurish quality to the film.

There are moments of humour in a gently affecting story that celebrates the ordinariness of its subjects.

BD

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/11/03/killing-of-a-sacred-deer-a-strange-story-of-payback-plus-mini-reviews-of-novitiate-gods-own-country-and-more.html>

Jane Goodall doc is stunning to look at

But the lone-white-hero-entering-the-empty-African-wilderness trope that the director employs feels Eurocentric and racist

BY **KEVIN RITCHIE**

NOVEMBER 8, 2017

3:45 PM



JANE (Brett Morgen). 90 minutes. Opens Friday (November 10). See **listing**. Rating: NNN

Early in Brett Morgen's documentary about Jane Goodall, the British primatologist is seen riding a boat toward Tanzania's Gombe Stream National Park to the orchestral swells of composer Philip Glass. In calm and unequivocal narration, Goodall explains that she always dreamed as a man – free from the restrictions the world imposes on women – and she references Hollywood characters like Doctor Dolittle and Tarzan.

"Unbiased by theory" (she had no formal training), Goodall is frequently framed against a vast landscape while exploring the park's verdant greenery in search of elusive chimpanzees.

Thus, Jane is as much about positioning Goodall as a feminist movie hero – with all the lush visual and aural delights that entails – as it is documenting her revolutionary observations of chimp behaviour.

What sets the doc apart from other filmic treatments is the astonishing trove of previously unseen 16 mm footage shot by Goodall's former husband, shot in the early 1960s by famed wildlife cameraman Hugo van Lawick during the key period in her research.

NOW Magazine – November 8, 2017 (2 of 2)

Morgen is known for archive-heavy documentaries on the Rolling Stones and Kurt Cobain, and while Goodall's fastidiousness and calm dictates a more meditative pace in comparison, the first half still manages to be a mind-melding acid trip of vivid sound design and electric green landscapes punctured by bright neon bugs, flora and fauna.

As Goodall observes chimps' parental behaviour, brutality and ability to use tools, she sees fear, joy, sorrow and jealousy – observations that come to not only reflect humanity as whole, but her own life after she begins a romance with van Lawick and gives birth to their son.

The latter half deals with Goodall's attempts to balance family obligations and work. She reluctantly gives up her post in Gombe and travels with van Lawick to the Serengeti, where the photographer captures scenes so stunning that Morgen uses some shots more than once.

Only Goodall – the film is loosely based on her book *In The Shadow Of Man* – is interviewed in Jane, and she has clearly told her story many times. Once wondrous details are familiar, and her account is matter of fact. This is very much Goodall's narrative and she remains firmly in control. Morgen contrasts her straightforwardness with a mix of sweeping, Hollywoodesque mythologizing and more rote documentary techniques, like cross-cutting montage of news footage and clips.

On one hand, exalting Goodall feels right, especially for the way she endured (and even capitalized on) sexist media coverage to keep her research going, and how she held onto a career in the face of social pressures.

But the lone-white-hero-entering-the-empty-African-wilderness image is dated and tired, especially given that the mythologies Goodall so adored as a child – namely Tarzan – now seem Eurocentric and racist.

African people are rarely seen in the film, and the refugees that were flooding across the border from civil-war-racked Belgian Congo when Goodall first arrived in Gombe are not mentioned.

Jane seems to exist in an idyllic vacuum only interrupted when the chimps turn violent. Morgen doesn't challenge or question the lone hero narrative, but reinforces it with stylistic choices – like the old-school Philip Glass score – that make this film so beautiful to drink in.

Toronto Star – November 9, 2017

Lady Bird's Gerwig and Ronan fly high as 'nope' turns to hope: Reel Brief reviews

By **BRUCE DEMARA** Entertainment Reporter
PETER HOWELL MOVIE CRITIC
Thu., Nov. 9, 2017

Jane



*Documentary on celebrated simian researcher Jane Goodall, written and directed by Brett Morgen. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 90 minutes. **STC***

Almost all of us know something about Jane Goodall and her pioneering work studying chimpanzees in the wild.

Brett Morgen's documentary adds to that knowledge in ways that make her life and legacy even more extraordinary and inspiring.



Jane Goodall in Jane.

It helps immeasurably that Morgen has access to more than 100 hours of "rediscovered" footage shot by Hugo van Lawick, a nature photographer who came to Africa to chronicle her adventures.

Van Lawick, who later became Goodall's husband, was one of the top in his craft in the world and his work is sublime.

Morgen sets the story up nicely with some textual preamble, including the fact that Goodall, at the age of 26 and with no university degree or training, came to Gombe in the early 1960s at the behest of legendary anthropologist Louis Leakey.

There's also a recent interview with Goodall knits together the threads of her eventful life and what a rich life it has been, filled with highs and lows, tragedy and triumph.

Goodall has left her mark on the world and this documentary ably and engagingly celebrates that legacy.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/11/09/gerwig-and-ronan-fly-high-as-nope-turns-to-hope-reel-brief-reviews.html>

Review: Jane Goodall documentary, *Jane*, tells an eloquent, vivid life story



Fifty years ago, a National Geographic filmmaker was sent to join Jane Goodall in the Tanzanian jungle, where he captured over 140 hours of 16mm footage that was never used.

BRAD WHEELER >
19 HOURS AGO



BRAD WHEELER

19 HOURS AGO NOVEMBER 9, 2017
3 out of 4 stars

Jane is Brett Morgen's gorgeous, convincing new documentary on Jane Goodall, the one-time ape watcher and current UN messenger of peace. Her life is told in an eloquent if overfancy way, using vivid, recently unearthed footage from Goodall's earliest National Geographic years in Gombe. Graceful narration comes from the 83-year-old primatologist herself. Goodall speaks of her "magical invitation" to Africa, which is where we watch her snoop around the forest as a telegenic explorer in cargo shorts, patiently earning the trust of animals who, she discovered, had characteristics previously thought to be human only. Chimpanzees were people, too! They were banana stealers, capable of ugly violence and incredible affection. As a young woman, Goodall had no domestic aspirations. Observing a mother chimp with child stirred her instinct in that regard. Director Morgen is a bit messy with his timeline and his relentless insect photography really bugged me. But the biggest nit to pick is with Philip Glass's intrusive, crazily grandiose score. The film ends with chimp factions at war and Goodall shocked at their capability for brutality. For humans, the evolution isn't over.

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/film-reviews/review-jane-goodall-documentary-jane-tells-an-eloquent-vivid-life-story/article36893804/>

Toronto Star – November 16, 2017

Wonder, Thelma and Paradise all hit the target: Reel Brief mini reviews

Quick takes on new theatrical offerings Wonder, Thelma, Bill Nye: Science Guy and Paradise, plus The Hitman's Bodyguard on DVD.

By **BRUCE DEMARA** Entertainment Reporter

PETER HOWELL Movie Critic

Thu., Nov. 16, 2017

Bill Nye: Science Guy



*Documentary on popular scientist Bill Nye by David Alvarado and Jason Sussberg. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 101 minutes. **STC***

Bow-tied brainiac Bill Nye gets a sympathetic treatment from admiring filmmakers in this non-shocking doc.

Co-directors David Alvarado and Jason Sussberg remind us off the top of Nye's 1990s fame as the affable engineer of TV's *Bill Nye the Science Guy*. He's fondly remembered by fans as "America's favourite scientist."

From there Nye has not-so-boldly gone in different directions, including joining the campaign to fight global warming, a cause better personified by the non-scientist Al Gore. Nye has perhaps unwisely been willing to publicly debate climate-change deniers Ken Ham and Joe Bastardi, who obviously seek to benefit from his fame.

The docmakers don't dig into what makes Nye tick, other than noting his fear of contracting the neurological disease that runs in his family, and which contributed to his reluctance to marry and have children. He also has an aversion to selfies and he's touchy about claims he's not a real scientist.

The shrewdest comment about Nye comes from Neil deGrasse Tyson, a fellow science populist, who tells his friend that he needs to prove he's "more than a childhood educator."

Peter Howell

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/11/16/wonder-thelma-and-paradise-all-hit-the-target-reel-brief-mini-reviews.html>

The Globe and Mail – November 17, 2017

Review: In Bill Nye: Science Guy, everyone's favourite scientist is trying to save the planet



Everyone's favourite scientist is trying to save the planet in his new documentary, Bill Nye: Science Guy.

MARK MEDLEY

10 HOURS AGO NOVEMBER 17, 2017

MARK MEDLEY >
10 HOURS AGO



Bill Nye rose to prominence in the mid-nineties on the strength of his titular TV show, which taught kids the wonders of science. During the course of this uneven portrait he's dubbed both "America's favourite scientist" and "the science teacher we all wish we had," the latter by Neil deGrasse Tyson, no slouch himself.

It's a by-the-numbers profile, complete with the requisite visit to his childhood home, but, partway through, it becomes a rather piercing portrait of a man constantly doubting himself – while he studied under Carl Sagan, he lacks a PhD and is therefore, in the eyes of his detractors, not a real scientist – and struggling with his celebrity.

He's on a mission to dismantle the claims of climate-change deniers and anti-science zealots, but there's a real chance he's doing more harm than good: At one point he debates noted "Young Earth Creationist" Ken Ham, founder of the Creation Museum, which only serves to drum up donations to Ham's even-more-insane Ark Encounter, a life-sized recreation of Noah's boat, which Nye later tours with obvious discomfort. ("The scientists on your staff, as respectful as I can be, are incompetent," Nye tells Ham.) Nye isn't the most sympathetic figure – he's aloof and surprisingly full of himself – and interviews with his friends, some of whom he's betrayed in his quest for fame, reveal a far different man than the zany scientist the world came to love.

Still, he's laser-focused – Nye never married, has no kids – and his battle to save the planet for future generations – the children of those who watched him on TV – is noble. (N/A) Mark Medley

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/in-bill-nye-science-guy-everyones-favourite-scientist-is-trying-to-save-the-planet/article37003382/>

Sundance Wish List: 70 Films We Hope Will Head to Park City in 2018

Another exciting Sundance lineup is right around the corner, and as filmmakers wait for the final word, we've assembled this list of strong possibilities for the 2018 program.

By Eric Kohn, Jude Dry, Chris O'Falt, Kate Erbland, Jenna Marotta, David Ehrlich, Zack Sharf

Nov 20, 2017 10:28 am



The Sundance Film Festival

The fall is often perceived as the launch pad for awards season, as numerous prestige films compete for attention in the final weeks of the year. For much of the film community, however, it's also the first major window into movies worth talking about next year. That's because the Sundance Film Festival lineup typically drops in the middle of November, shaking up the holiday season with a mixture of familiar faces and newcomers who could make an impact in Park City this January. With programmers working in overdrive to complete the lineup in the coming weeks, and filmmakers praying to break through as the deadlines loom, we've cobbled together as much intel as we can for this extensive preview featuring dozens of promising titles that stand a good chance at making their way to Sundance this year. As usual, we've tried to avoid projects that are reportedly not far enough along yet (sorry, David Lowery's Robert Redford vehicle "The Old Man and the Gun"). Place your bets now, and check to see how much we got right once the first round of Sundance announcements drop after the holiday weekend.

Note: This list has been updated with more films since its initial publication.

"About a Mountain"

Director: Lily Henderson

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: A Cinereach development grant helped this doc-narrative hybrid reach completion, with former Union Docs curator Lily Henderson at the helm. Shot with both actors and documentary subjects in conversational interviews, the film is said to blend traditional narrative structure with non-fiction techniques to form a deeper truth. Based on the environmental non-fiction book by John D'Agata, "About a Mountain" involves a government plan to store nuclear waste at Nevada's Yucca Mountain. Blending a documentarian's eye with a love of story, Henderson's unique approach would bring some excitement to the documentary lineup. —JD

"All About Nina"

Director: Eva Vives

Cast: Common, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Beau Bridges, Clea DuVall, Melonie Diaz

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: This one has Sundance hit written all over it. Vives is a writer-director many have been excited about for a long time, as illustrated by her high-profile

IndieWire – November 20, 2017 (2 of 4)

cast, support from Sundance's Screenwriters and Directors Labs, and backing of respected indie producers (Brian Kavanaugh-Jones, Joshua Astrachan). The story of an edgy comedian whose career is starting to take off while her life falls apart could be the perfect role for Winstead to take the next big step in her career. –CO

"American Animals"

Director: Bart Layton

Cast: Evan Peters, Barry Keoghan

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: Layton's 2012 documentary "The Imposter" was a fascinating look at a man who impersonated a family's missing son, with a canny mixture of interviews and reenactments. For his first narrative feature, Layton again draws from a weird-but-true premise, this one involving four men who attempted a crazy heist based on what they'd seen in movies. "The Imposter" showed the filmmaker had a terrific control over suspense and intrigue, so he's overdue to develop that skill. —EK

"Beast of Burden"

Director: Jesper Ganslandt

Cast: Daniel Radcliffe, Pablo Schreiber, Grace Gummer

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: Radcliffe has picked smart and unexpected roles from himself in his post-"Harry Potter" career, so his choice to play a drug-running pilot speaks well for Adam Hoelzel's script, which is being filmed by Swedish director Jesper Ganslandt. Radcliffe's character is a master of secrets – having deceived the feds, the cartel, and his wife in his years of drug running over the Mexican border – but after one last big haul of cocaine, he's ready to start over. –CO

"Black Mother"

Director: Khalik Allah

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: The photographer-turned-director behind the striking "Field Niggas" and who supplied the New Orleans documentary imagery and audio for Beyonce's "Lemonade" has been exploring and working out his own unique approach to nonfiction filmmaking for the last few years – with the help of backers like Cinereach and Sundance – and this project promises to be the one where he takes a big step forward. Described as "part film, part baptism," Allah has been traveling back and forth to Jamaica to capture prostitutes and churches in a film that promises to be musical and spiritual as it captures the "vibrant, idiosyncratic souls" of the island. –CO

"Blaze"

Director: Ethan Hawke

Cast: Alia Shawkat, Steve Zahn, Sam Rockwell, Ben Dickey



Richard Linklater and Ethan Hawke

IndieWire – November 20, 2017 (3 of 4)

Stephen Lovekin/Variety/REX/Shutterstock

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: Directing his fourth feature film following the 2014 documentary “Seymour: An Introduction,” Hawke set his sights on a biopic about country and western singer Blaze Foley. “Blaze” draws from a memoir by Foley’s longtime partner Sybil Rosen, who plays her own mother in the film and co-wrote the script with Hawke. Newcomer Ben Dickey stars as the musician opposite Shawkat as Rosen. Hawke’s longtime collaborator Richard Linklater rounds out the cast, along with legendary songwriter Kris Kristofferson. Though Hawke’s previous films have premiered at top-tier international festivals, with a story as American as country music itself, it would be a shame to let “Blaze” debut anywhere else. —JD

“Bisbee 17”

Director: Robert Greene

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: Greene earned strong reviews at Sundance in 2016 for “Kate Plays Christine,” which strengthened his skill for making unique documentaries that blur the line between fact and fiction. The director’s latest, “Bisbee 17,” is set in a mining town on the Arizona-Mexico border and follows the locals as they stage a recreation of an event that occurred nearly 100 years ago when 1,200 immigrants were deported. Footage of the recreations was shown at the 2017 Hot Docs Pitch Forum, where IndieWire called it “slick” and “evocatively noir-ish.” —ZS

“Building the American Dream”

Director: Chelsea Hernandez

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: The incredibly popular project from the crowdfunding site Seed & Spark has found itself in the middle of an timely story. Hernandez has been capturing how the Texas economic boom has been built (literally) on the exploitation of undocumented labor force, but in response to tragedy a few brave individuals are standing up to fight for the most basic human rights, such as water breaks while they work in the Texas heat. In the midst of Trump-era policies, the endangerment of DACA and Houston needing to be rebuilt after Hurricane Harvey, Hernandez’s story only feels that much more urgent. —CO

“The Catcher Was a Spy”

Director: Ben Lewin

Cast: Paul Rudd, Guy Pearce, Jeff Daniels, Paul Giamatti

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: One of the most star-studded films that’s tipped to premiere at Sundance next year, Ben Lewin’s follow-up to “The Sessions” could be another acting showcase. A suspenseful historical biopic, “The Catcher Was a Spy” stars Paul Rudd as the brilliant Red Sox player Moe Berg, who became a spy for the U.S. government after retiring from Major League Baseball in 1939. Filmed in both Boston and Prague, the drama will likely focus on the time Berg spent abroad as he tried to assess the Nazis’ efforts to build an atom bomb and recruit Europe’s best scientists to the Allied cause. The film was slated to play at TIFF in 2017, only to be pulled from the official lineup because post-production couldn’t be completed in time for the festival. A Sundance bow seems all but inevitable. —DE

“Chained for Life”

Director: Aaron Schimberg

Cast: Jess Weixler, Adam Pearson, Stephen Plunkett, Charlie Korsmo

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: Boasting a premise that sounds like “The Square” as

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directed by David Lynch (with a dash of Crispin Glover thrown in for good measure), Aaron Schimberg's "Chained for Life" takes place on the set of a controversial art-house horror film starring actors with disabilities or disfigurements. And then things go off the rail and the boundary between what's staged and what's real begin to blur. Produced by The Eyeslicer's Dan Schoenbrun and Vanessa McDonnell, and "Hide Your Smiling Faces" director Daniel Patrick Carbone, "Chained for Life" certainly has the right pedigree to provide the Sundance lineup with the challenging fare it needs to hold together. — DE

"Chef Flynn"

Director: Cameron Yates

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: Flynn McGarry is a 19-year-old superstar chef who has been called the Justin Bieber of the food world, and now he gets the documentary treatment from Cameron Yates. The filmmaker gained access to 15 years worth of personal vérité footage, archival footage, and photographs to tell McGarry's life story year by year. —ZS

"Come Sunday"

Director: Joshua Marston

Cast: Chiwetel Ejiofor, Danny Glover, Martin Sheen, Jason Segel, Lakeith Stanfield, Condola Rashad

Why We Hope It Heads to Park City: Marston has yet to follow-up "Maria Full of Grace" with anything quite as good as his impactful feature debut, but he has assembled a stellar cast for his next drama. Produced by Marc Forster and Ira Glass with a screenplay by Marcus Hinchey ("All Good Things"), "Come Sunday" tells the story of an Evangelist who is ousted from his church for preaching that there is no Hell. With a cast

full of Hollywood's most impressive black actors, "Come Sunday" could be the perfect blend of talents, especially if Forster and Glass can bring some levity to some of Marston's heavier instincts. —JD

Holiday Gift Guide 2017: The best experiential gifts in Toronto

From an eco membership to theatre tickets, here's your 2017 guide to the best gifts that don't require wrapping

BY MICHELLE DA SILVA, KEVIN RITCHIE

NOVEMBER 23, 2017

1:05 PM



Karma Co-op's #ZeroWaste Starter Kit is a great gift for anyone who wants to reduce their carbon footprint.

FOR THE GUY WHO LOVES GROOMING

A proper haircut and shave can feel like a real indulgence. Glassbox Barbershop, winner of NOW's 2017 Readers' Choice for best barber shop and men's salon, mixes traditional barbering and modern men's hairstyling. At Barber & Co, beer trims and hot shaves can be enjoyed with a cocktail in hand (there's a small bar tucked away in the back). Whatever his style, treat the dapper dude in your life to a gift card to either spot over the holidays.

(\$20-\$65, Glassbox Barbershop, 338 Harbord, glassboxbarbershop.com; \$20-\$60, Barber & Co, 89 Ossington, barberandco.com)

FOR THE FRIEND WHO'S WATCHED EVERYTHING ON NETFLIX

Shopping for a nerd who has binged it all and complains there is never anything good on Netflix? Clearly they need another streaming service. Shudder is devoted to horror, suspense and thrillers, while Fandor is all about art house and has a huge selection of Canadian films.

(Shudder.com, \$50/year; Fandor.com, \$90/year.)

FOR THE ECO-CHIC PAL

Organic food co-op Karma, which started in the early 70s, is getting into the holiday gift basket game. For those who want to reduce their footprint, there's the kitchen-and-bathroom-focused **#ZeroWaste** Starter Kit, which comes with a one-month trial membership. The foodcentric Best of Karma option is the priciest (\$105) and has a three-month trial.

(\$55, Karma Co-op, 739 Palmerston, karmacoop.org)

FOR THE MUSIC LOVER

Art of Time Ensemble fuses high art and pop culture in concerts that span every genre. Get into the holiday spirit with **To All A Good Night 3**, its annual concert of diverse wintery tunes and readings from December 14-16, or buy tickets to one of four spring shows. If you miss the TSO's annual performance of Handel's **Messiah**, start 2018 off with a series of Mozart concerts. Gift certificates to the TSO make a thoughtful holiday gift, and for classical music enthusiasts, there's always the option of purchasing a year-long subscription.

(\$25-\$64, Art of Time Ensemble, artoftimeensemble.com; \$52-\$113, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, tso.ca)

FOR THE BUDDING THEATRE CRITIC

Soulpepper has loads of holiday-themed shows to get you into the seasonal spirit, from the classic **A Christmas Carol** to family-friendly Peter Pan. Its 2018 season promises something for every theatre lover: productions of Amadeus and Animal Farm as well as concerts inspired by the 1920s. Canadian Stage isn't doing any holiday-themed productions, but the 30-year-old company has loads of cutting-edge theatre, dance and music performances in the new year. Tickets and season subscriptions can be purchased online.

(Tickets starting at \$20, Soulpepper, soulpepper.ca; tickets starting at \$39, Canadian Stage, canadianstage.com)

FOR THE BREWMASTER

Of course you can wrap a few tall boys and toss 'em under the tree (here are **Toronto's 24 best indie beers**), but a gift voucher for one of Beer Lovers' Tour Company's hoppy events will

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create much longer-lasting memories. Gift certificates can be redeemed for themed tours that include Toronto breweries, chocolate and cheese pairings, and more.

(\$149, Beer Lovers' Tour Co., beerloverstour.com)

FOR THE ART ENTHUSIAST

A membership to the Art Gallery of Ontario, whose collection includes over 90,000 works, will never grow old. Plus, the highly anticipated **Yayoi Kusama retrospective** arrives in spring. What better time to spoil the art lover on your list with an annual membership that yields unlimited free visits and other benefits? If dinosaurs and cultural relics are of interest, gift a membership to the Royal Ontario Museum. Benefits include unlimited free admission, shopping and dining discounts and exclusive previews.

(\$45-\$145/year, Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas West, ago.ca; \$112-\$161/year, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queens Park, rom.on.ca)

FOR THE CINEPHILE

We all know that one friend who spends every weekend at the movies. Wouldn't they be thrilled with a membership to the TIFF Bell Lightbox? Members get discounted screenings as well as access to the Toronto International Film Festival presale. And for the documentary buff, annual memberships to the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema include free popcorn!

(Starting at \$49, TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King West, tiff.net; \$38-\$359, Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor West, hotdocscinema.ca)

FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING

Sometimes, the best experiences are the ones you can give others. Charitable organizations like Oxfam provide gift giving options at every price point for those in need. For example, buy a chicken, sheep, goat or donkey to help a family struggling with food security. Bicycles, school books and safe drinking water are also options.

(\$15-\$175, Oxfam, unwrapped.oxfam.ca/)

Doc celebrates free speech at critical moment

As free speech concerns grow, “Code Name Sally” pays homage to the time Canada stood up for free expression and Salman Rushdie.



In 1992, then-Ontario premier Bob Rae, left, embraced Salman Rushdie at a PEN Canada benefit the author had secretly been brought to from the U.K., where he was in hiding. (BERNARD WEIL)



Author Salman Rushdie lived for years under a death threat after his 1988 book "The Satanic Verses" drew the wrath of Iranian religious leaders. (CHRIS YOUNG / THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO)

By **JUDITH TIMSON**Current affairs
Thu., Nov. 23, 2017

Here's the thing about freedom of expression.

It may seem like it's having a "moment" now, with universities accused of trampling free speech (hello, Wilfrid Laurier University) when it comes to sensitive issues, or U.S. President Donald Trump demonizing and threatening a free press.

But freedom of expression is never just a moment.

It's a difficult, enduring mission to protect — and debate — our right to free speech, to keep or get writers and whistleblowers who run afoul of tyrannic regimes out of jail, to protect the many people whose lives are at risk simply for speaking out against authoritarian regimes, be they political, cultural or religious. And to guard against violating human dignity and rights.

That said, there are astounding and galvanizing moments — big and small — in this battle.

A chilling audio tape recently released by Laurier University teaching assistant Lindsay Shepherd that revealed her being bullied by three faculty members because she dared to show

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her students two sides of a debate on the use of non-traditional gender pronouns, is filled with dialogue worthy of a biting play. I hope an aspiring writer gets on it. The university has since apologized to Shepherd.

Here's another moment, one you might not be aware of: Did you know that 25 years ago, a small group of people in PEN Canada pulled off a highly secretive and complex mission to spirit then-beleaguered U.K. writer Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, onto the stage of a PEN benefit at the Winter Garden Theatre in Toronto?

At the time, Rushdie had been in deep hiding in Britain for almost three years after the late Ayatollah Khomeini, then leader of Iran, in 1989 issued a fatwa calling for him to be executed. His book had, among other things, made fun of clerics, a particular no-no for the religious thought police.

You might be interested in

Rushdie was being protected by British police, but his government had not openly embraced him.

It was a tense and dangerous time for the author and all those in the publishing world who supported his work. Several book stores were bombed, and his Japanese translator murdered.

In the fall of 1992, Canada played a small but key part in this drama, effectively opening the door for Rushdie to be supported by other governments and for the fatwa to be condemned in a motion at the UN.

Next Tuesday, PEN Canada is honouring that moment at a benefit at the Hot Docs Cinema where it will screen a short film, *Code Name Sally*, that chronicles, in a series of interviews with those involved — former governor general Adrienne Clarkson; her husband, writer John Ralston Saul; former Ontario premier Bob Rae, the first political leader to embrace Rushdie publicly; and publisher Louise Denny — how Rushdie was flown to Canada on a private plane to stand as a surprise guest on the stage, surrounded in solidarity by other writers and artists, at an emotional tribute to free speech.

Rushdie himself calls it a turning point in his dark drama.

Code Name Sally — because “Sally” is what they *think* they called Rushdie during the covert planning (although some of them believe it was Harry; hey, they're writers) is about 26 minutes long and packs an emotional and instructive punch.

Saul chokes up on camera, Denny talks of being crammed with her co-conspirators into a phone booth (no smart phones, no social media) in a “thriller-like moment” and the Bradgate Arms, now a tony seniors' residence, is referred to as “a CSIS safe house.”

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You get a sense of not only how dedicated a small group of literary and political movers and shakers were to helping Rushdie, but how much serious fun they had being involved in what Dennys calls “a wild and Canadian moment.”

In his interview, Rushdie makes fun of his code name, Sally. “So I was Meg Ryan?” he deadpans, referencing the 1989 movie *When Harry Met Sally*. But — having grown up Muslim — he more seriously argues there is a “straight line” to be drawn in extremism from his being sentenced to death in 1989 to the terrorism attacks in New York of 9/11.

Rushdie has resumed a public life, was knighted by the Queen and lives mainly in New York. He slams the current “culture of outrage” and particularly accuses “the left” of giving in to the notion that “offending people is a bad thing.”

The movie is a gift to PEN Canada, shaped by the father-son duo of Canadian movie maker Sturla Gunnarsson (*Monsoon*) and his son Ari, 30, who lives in Beijing, where he makes music videos.

Ari Gunnarsson, who directed *Code Name Sally*, recalls being read Rushdie’s children’s classic *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by his parents: “I can still remember my father explaining that Rushdie had dedicated the book to his son while he was in hiding.” For him, the highlight was the Rushdie interview.

He also embraced the opportunity to work with his dad, who was at the original PEN event and remembers “the huge gasp” when Rushdie appeared.

Gunnarsson was unaware at the time of the behind-the-scenes drama — and was surprised today by how vivid it remains in the participants’ minds.

Tuesday’s benefit will include a panel discussion with these key participants, who no doubt will have much to say about how prickly — and more complex — this battle for freedom of expression has become.

I like to imagine that Rushdie himself will surprise everyone again and show up, probably offending some people, thus completing the story of a small, previously undocumented event that had an outsize impact on him and the ongoing fight for freedom of expression.

Judith Timson writes weekly about cultural, social and political issues. You can reach her at judith.timson@sympatico.ca and follow her on Twitter @judithtimson

Holiday movie screenings happening in Toronto

Whats On Nov 27, 2017 Toronto.com

With the return of the holiday season comes endless hours of watching classic film favourites. Lucky for us, several seasonal favourites are making their way back to the city's cinema screens - from the heartwarming, *Love Actually*, to the hilarious, *Elf*.

To add to the holiday spirit, many of the movie screenings are completely free.

We've rounded up where to catch all the holiday movie screenings in cinemas across Toronto.



Peter Wright's production of The Nutcracker. Image courtesy of Hot Docs Cinema.

Hot Docs Cinema

506 Bloor St W, Toronto, ON M5S 1Y3

The Annex-located Hot Docs Cinema's holiday classic movie screenings are all free of charge, (just don't forget to reserve your spot). Theatre-fans can also catch a special performance of *The Nutcracker* on screen for under \$20.

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation: Saturday, December 16, 2017, 9:00 p.m. Free.

A Christmas Story: Sunday, December 17, 2017, 12:00 p.m. Free.

Elf: Thursday, December 21, 2017, 9:00 p.m. Free.

The Holiday: Friday, December 22, 2017, 8:30 p.m. Free.

Performance on Screen: The Nutcracker: Saturday, December 23 & Tuesday, December 26, 2017, 12:00 p.m.



Image courtesy of Cineplex Canada.

Select Cineplex Theatres

Various locations in Toronto.

Several Cineplex theatres are screening Christmas classics for the month of December, as well as a live performance of the Broadway production, *Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn*.

Elf: Saturday, December 2, 2017

The Polar Express: Saturday, December 9, 2017

Miracle on 34th Street: Saturday, December 2 & Wednesday, December 13, 2017

Irving Berlin's Holiday Inn (captured live): Saturday, December 9 & Thursday, December 21, 2017

Bolshoi Ballet: The Nutcracker: Sunday, December 10, 2017

Love Actually: Monday, December 11, 2017



White Christmas. Image courtesy of The Royal Cinema.

The Royal Cinema

608 College St, Toronto, ON M6G 1B4

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The Royal hosts a double-feature screening, bring film-fanatics a black & white Christmas.

White Christmas: Saturday, December 23, 2017, 5:00 p.m.

Black Christmas: Saturday, December 23, 2017, 8:00 p.m.



The Revue Cinema

400 Roncesvalles Ave, Toronto, ON M6R 2M9

Spend your Sunday laughing at this complimentary screening of National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation.

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation: Sunday, December 17, 2017, 4:00 p.m. Free, admission by non-perishable food item for the Parkdale Community Food Bank.

TIFF Bell Lightbox

350 King St W, Toronto, ON M5V 3X5

Black Christmas: Sunday, December 24, 2017, 7:00 p.m. Free.

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Holiday Movie Preview: 27 cinematic escapes this holiday season

November 27, 2017

Jason Anderson

‘Tis the season for ambitious awards bait — with some comedies and family fare sprinkled in — and then the scares and action crash the party as New Year arrives.

Ramen Heads

Arrives: Dec. 22

Stars: Osamu Tomita

The skinny: The holiday movie season is sadly skimpy when it comes to foodie fare but thankfully, viewers can sate their appetites with this Hot Docs favourite, about a Japanese master’s quest for the perfect noodle soup as well as the wider history of one of Japanese cuisine’s signature dishes.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2017/11/25/holiday-movie-preview-27-cinematic-escapes-this-holiday-season.html>

Hot Pods: Podcast Fest Highlights Non-fiction's Newest Form

The industry side of podding

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published November 28th, 2017 [0 Comments](#)

[Embed from Getty Images](#)

This year's second annual [Hot Docs Podcast Festival](#) — let's call it Hot Pods for short — offered a mix of hits and how-to's covering the increasingly popular audio stream of long form non-fiction. The festival drew impressive numbers of people willing to pay TIFF-level prices for live recordings of some of their favourite podcasts such as the humorous comedy show [Grownups Read Things They Wrote As Kids](#) and the alt-political news pod' [Intercepted](#) featuring host Jeremy Scahill in conversation with Naomi Klein, Desmond Cole, and rapper Narcy aka Yassin Alsalman. (The *Intercepted* show was mostly notable as a testing ground for Cole's candidacy in Toronto's next mayoral race.) There might not have been much in the way of "documentary" per se, but the festival was an engaging showcase of variations in reportage and non-fiction storytelling. It was exciting to hear a variety of stories about breaking new ground in non-fiction.

The live performances were entertaining recordings of hot podcasts, but showed that some series play live better than others. *Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids*, for example, was a lot of fun as several brave guests, including a number of hosts of Hot Pods selections, pulled out their diaries, early poems, or high school writing assignments to relive their early years with good humour. The podcast offered readings of everything from coming out confessions to angsty reflections on enduring a war "like Anne Frank." The show was akin to a comedy routine, or an evening of live storytelling, and was one a festival highlight. ***Listen to the Hot Pods episode of Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids below:***
Kinks and Cooking

There were a few more kinks to be found in the semi-live recording of [The Fridge Light](#), a fun foodie podcast from the CBC. *The Fridge Light* was only three episodes young when it appeared at Hot Pods and the relative freshness of the series showed, particularly for the extended periods in which the audience sat in the dark and listened to pre-recorded segments of the show. However, the live element of the podcast was a lot of fun since *The Fridge Light* was one of few events at the festival to incorporate audience participation.

The event challenged attendees to bring their favourite sweet and salty cravings in a snack food smackdown. Host Chris Nuttall-Smith and guest panelists Dustin Gallagher, Neda Maghbouleh and Janis Thiessen evaluated the entries, which included Swedish Berries, Korean beef jerky, dried snap peas, Old Dutch chips accompanied with an artery-clogging dip that featured at least

four kinds of cheese, and some cinnamon Pop Tarts that had the judges gagging. (They were also missing icing, as noted by the murmurs of disapproval grumbling around the room.) The recording ended with a the fire alarm going off, as all good sessions in the kitchen should, and gave audiences a taste of the exciting bloopers that don't make the final cut of the released podcasts. By remaining seated and watching the panelists re-record the final verdict and try to capture the same sense of spontaneity, the event pulled back the curtain to show that even top-level producers like the CBC have to work out some kinks while exploring relatively new terrain. ***Listen to the episode of The Fridge Light recorded at the festival below:***

Industry Panels



Someone Knows Something

Courtesy of CBC

On the industry side of the festival, Hot Pods featured informative sessions for crowds that mostly consisted of active or prospective podcasters. Some pointers might have seemed like common knowledge or no-brainers for the experienced, like offering something original and pursuing a podcast that reflects one's passion, but the event gave helpful tips like incorporating media like photos and videos across channels and having a strict publishing schedule complete with release strategy. Don't just record a conversation and throw it into the void. (Oddly enough, few of the live podcasts at the fest incorporated visual elements.)

The festival's first panel, "Beyond the Blood: Turning True Crime Stories Into Artful Podcasts," highlighted the sub-genre that helped the art form explode with *Serial*. Panelists Connie Walker (*Missing and Murdered*), Tally Abecassis (*First Day Back*) and David Ridgen (*Someone Knows Something*) discussed their choices for pursuing their stories as podcasts, rather than as news stories or feature films. The decision came down to context, space, and aesthetics. In Abecassis' case, she added that the choice to do a podcast stemmed from respecting her subject's privacy and access in addition to the practical factor that the setting of her story (a halfway house) wasn't aesthetically pleasing for a visual work.

The question of access and accountability arose in Walker and Ridgen's talking points with the journalist and filmmaker noting the challenges of gaining releases for subjects whose voices appear in a podcast. Ridgen advised the audience that the archaic nature of the Canadian Broadcasting Act doesn't account for newer forms such as a podcast, so storytellers do not need to obtain a release from a subject to include a voice, which means that cold calling interviewees or catching them by surprise doesn't bring the bureaucratic hurdles entailed in journalism and film. Ridgen added that changes to the Act are inevitable, though, so true crime podders can expect the field to become tougher.

The three panelists agreed, however, that a selling point for podcasting is its ability to add context. How much time the story needed or how far the panelist wanted to develop the story were crucial decisions to make, since podcasting allowed for more breadth and depth of coverage than a snippet on the evening news or a two-hour feature film might have. Walker

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noted that by expanding the investigation of the cold case of Alberta Williams beyond the news story in which it was originally intended to be told allowed her to situate the young woman's

disappearance and death into the larger histories of colonialism and Residential Schools in Canada. This expansion, Walker added, capitalized on the popularity of true crime to share this dark side of Canadian history with a wide audience that might not have tuned into it had it appeared in a conventional news form.



Sleepover
Courtesy CBC
Finding a Voice

Walker's point about context and using the freedom of podcasting to inject an original perspective to the story complemented the consensus offered by the Hot Pods panel "Finding Your Voice: The Art and Craft of Hosting a Podcast." Panelists Sook-Yin Lee (*Sleepover*), Ryan McMahon (*Red Man Laughing*), and Dan Misener (*Grownups Read Things They Wrote As Kids*) agreed that people who seek out podcasts generally want to hear unique voices. Lee's key

advice was to "let 'er rip!" and take full advantage of the freedom of podcast to create an uncensored and unafraid message that cuts through the increasingly cluttered iTunes store.

McMahon offered his own success story that illustrated Lee's advice. He told audiences about exploding in popularity after venting a lengthy rant about the pitfalls of "reconciliation" and publishing it online, which then went viral after tapping into a frustration that others were too shy to voice. It was on this note, though, that McMahon and the other panelists emphasized the importance of good listening and editing to convey a sincere voice that reflects the character of the podcaster and will engage the audience week by week.

Ready for Take-Off

The festival's most productive panel, "Ready for Take-Off: What It Takes to Launch a Successful Podcast," drew upon the experiences of three peas in the pod world. Jesse Brown (*Canadaland*), Eric Eddings (*The Nod*), and Leital Molad (*Missing Richard Simmons*) emphasized the value in creating an intimate space that absorbs listeners for the thirty minutes to an hour and immerses them into the world of the podcast. The panelists noted that this intimacy lends itself towards suggestive selling and makes podcasts appealing to advertisers, which is something to consider when resources for independent producers might otherwise be restricted to self-financing or crowd-sourcing.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – November 28, 2017 (4 of 4)

Brown noted the latter proved successful for him after a year of mostly financing *Canadaland* out of pocket when his initial sponsor dropped after the early episodes. With the average

subscription coming in at \$5 through Patreon, Brown told the crowd that one can make a living off podcasting provided there is a loyal fan base to support it.

Eddings and Molad echoed this sentiment with the former adding that partnerships and aggressive strategies to get *The Nod* noticed on iTunes helped increase its numbers and make it attractive to advertisers. Molad, an executive producer for First Look Media, brought a corporate perspective that similarly emphasized persistence and strategy. She noted that a well-executed plan of earned media and social media should take advantage of trends and newsworthy topics to gain support.

It all comes back to the originality of a voice, though, and the industry side of Hot Pods circled back to a general question that ran throughout the festival: when every other outlet records podcasts, why should people bother listening to you? There was no definitive answer to the question, nor should there be, but a few hours of active and engaged listening is a good place to start.

Hot Docs Cinema is screening your favourite Christmas movies for FREE

Ainsley Smith Nov 30, 2017 10:25 am 412

In the lead up to Christmas, do you watch the same holiday movies every year?

Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in The Annex is into the annual ritual. The theatre is screening a whole week's worth of holiday classics.

See below for totally **FREE** screenings as well as ticketed sing-alongs in support of The Stop Community Food Centre (please bring dried beans, rice or cash).

FREE SCREENINGS

White Christmas

And oldie, but a goodie. Watch as a successful song-and-dance duo and a sister act celebrate Christmas in Vermont while trying to save a failing inn along the way.

When: Saturday, December 16, 12 pm

Price: Free

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

No matter how bad you think you're own family is, you ain't got nothing on the Griswolds. Perspective people.

When: Saturday, December 16, 9 pm

Price: Free

A Christmas Story

Set in the 1940s, this comical tale follows Ralphie, a nine-year-old obsessed with the Red Ryder B.B. gun.

When: Sunday, December 17, 12 pm

Price: Free

Love Actually

Cry along to Joni Mitchell as Emma Thompson gets her heart broken. Bring tissues.

When: Sunday, December 17, 8 pm

Price: Free

Daily Hive – November 30, 2017 (2 of 2)

Elf

Follow Buddy (a human raised by elves) as he returns to New York in search of his true identity. Hilarity ensues.

When: Thursday, December 21, 9 pm

Price: Free

The Holiday

Go on holiday with Kate Winslet and Cameron Diaz as their two characters trade continents in this Christmas rom-com.

When: Friday, December 22, 8:30 pm

Price: Free

QUOTE-ALONGS

Home Alone

The hilarious Gillian Bartolucci hosts this quote-along featuring classic McCallister shenanigans with subtitles so that you can shout out your favourite lines, scream with Kevin and boo Uncle Frank.

When: Friday, December 15, 9:30 pm (doors at 8:30 pm)

Price: \$11.50 or ticket with beer and medium popcorn: \$16.81

Die Hard

Take a visit to Nakatomi Plaza this Christmas with a quote-along complete with festive drink specials and a hilarious pre-show hosted by funnyman Thomas Rivas. Yippee ki yay...

When: Saturday, December 23, 9:30 pm (doors at 8:30 pm)

Price: \$11.50 or ticket with beer and medium popcorn: \$16.81

Hot Docs Cinema

Address: 506 Bloor Street West, Toronto

Phone: 416.637.3123

WCSFP '17: John Ford on navigating chaos; Netflix talks

science

By Barry Walsh

November 30, 2017

Delegates at the 25th anniversary edition of the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers held in San Francisco may be deeply entrenched in the traditional content ecosystem, but are still eager to find out more about the rush of emerging platforms and technologies that are driving change, and to some extent, chaos, within the established order of doing things.

Navigating that chaos and finding opportunity was the central focus of a session moderated by TCB Media Rights founder and CEO Paul Heaney and Hunni Media founder and creative director **Bridget Hunnicutt**.

Lending a theatrical dimension to the proceedings, speakers **John Ford**, general manager for NPACT, and Jim Louderback, CEO for VidCon, were trotted out in costumes satirizing their positions within this ecosystem — Ford with a loincloth draped over his clothes and Louderback in a silver space suit.

Theatrics aside, each speaker presented data regarding the current states of both the established cable television sector and the ever-evolving spectrum of new platforms.

Ford, a longtime television executive who, in addition to his work with NPACT heads up programming for multicaster the Justice Network and its soon-to-launch sister net Quest, delivered data that illustrated the downward trending of cable subscription revenues over the past decade, exacerbated in the era of cord-cutting and cord-nevers. Despite that trajectory, Ford maintained that the cable universe won't "fall off the cliff" but will level off at a numbersignificantly smaller than the heady days when cable TV was the disruptor on the media landscape.

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Some smaller networks will be culled, while others may be shifted to digital only — a move that co-panelist Jim Louderback equated with the kiss of death.

Still, for his key takeaways, Ford advised delegates to embrace and understand change while continuing to pursue and preserve their business with linear networks, and while aggressively pursuing the new opportunities arising via SVOD and other distribution platforms.

For his part, Louderback, a veteran of the digital content sphere, dove into the scope of new content players, examining the growth of SVOD and the winners and losers within that space, the explosive impacts of mobile (“a TV in every pocket”) and the emerging generation of creators, who are churning out content filmed with iPhones, edited with apps, and viewed by millions.

Taking a look at some of the top content on Facebook’s nascent Watch platform, Louderback explained how the social media giant measures success via emotional responses, or “liking” a video. Just like television did decades before, the viewing platform itself dictates the form of content — vertical or “square” video rules for Watch and mobile, and many hugely successful mobile videos don’t feature narration, but replace it with text overlay, as mobile users are increasingly “audio agnostic.”

While Ford thought that such content wouldn’t translate across platforms, Louderback asked, “If you’re getting 10 million views on Snapchat, will you care?”

Netflix lifts veil on science wish list

As a further indicator of the turning tides, a session later in the day with Netflix director of original documentary programming, Jason Spingarn-Koff, was filled to overflowing. Not much of a surprise, given the session provided a rare glimpse into the content needs of the streaming behemoth.

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Spingarn-Koff, who spearheaded the *New York Times*' Op-Docs program before heading to Netflix, used the session to highlight the streamer's interest in episodic science content, such as the Bunim/Murray produced ***Bill Nye Saves the World*** which is entering a second season, as well as filmmaker-driven projects.

Outlining the key points in the Netflix approach to content, Spingarn-Koff said, "Mainly, what we like to say to producers is let the story determine the form."

The streamer doesn't use arbitrary run times, and pitches are welcome at any stage of production. Still, Spingarn-Koff said that "development is not our model."

Netflix wants globally exclusive rights in perpetuity for its originals, and does not take unsolicited pitches. Furthermore, given that Netflix is a global platform, projects should have a global or international relevance, but the streamer also is keen on regional stories with universal themes.

Spingarn-Koff also used the session to promote upcoming projects, including the feature documentary *Mercury 13*, looking at the 13 women who went through the same physiological testing as male astronauts for the Project Mercury program. Directed by **David Singleton** and Heather Walsh, it's not to be confused with **several other projects** currently underway or in development about the same topic.

The session also highlighted ***Chasing Coral***, helmed by **Jeff Orlowski** and bought by Netflix at Sundance. The doc, highlighting the calamitous impact of warming oceans on the Great Barrier Reef, was offered as evidence of Netflix's interest in projects with impact.

The World Congress of Science and Factual Producers continues in San Francisco until Friday, Dec. 1.

<http://realscreen.com/2017/11/30/wcsfp-17-john-ford-on-navigating-chaos-netflix-talks-science/>

WCSFP '17: NYT's Mark Thompson on platforms and “proper journalism”

By Barry Walsh
December 1, 2017

Hours before Mark Thompson, president and CEO of *The New York Times Company*, took the stage at the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers in San Francisco, his newspaper broke the story about a new wave of sexual misconduct allegations against renowned American playwright Israel Horovitz.

Shortly after his keynote interview with Love Productions' Sara Ramsden, the paper broke a story about President Donald Trump reportedly urging senior Republicans to end the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

All in a day's work for the venerable news institution, which has seemingly been firing on all cylinders as of late, breaking huge stories, such as the Harvey Weinstein sexual harassment scandal, with increasing regularity.

Citing “obstinacy and a belief in mission,” Thompson said the *Times*' strength is rooted in its dedication to keeping its news room intact, despite economic pressures fuelled by print journalism's increasing revenue woes.

During the keynote interview, the former chief executive of Channel 4 and director-general of the BBC tackled questions on Trump (who, for the record, has a “perfectly normal handshake”), the impact of the growing FAANG empire on the global mainstream media (“The fate of all of us is likely to be determined by the major digital platforms,” he maintained), attacks on the free press from both ends of the political spectrum, and the future of public service broadcasters.

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Of the latter, Thompson said that “many kinds of content,” including local news, “are going to see an acute market failure.” That will make the need for strong PSBs even greater, but there needs to be the political will to ensure that stability.

“I think the case for PSBs is very strong but I am pessimistic about it being heard in several countries,” he said.

While with the BBC, Thompson weathered controversy regarding his decision to allow then- British National Party leader Nick Griffin on *Question Time* – a decision based on Thompson’s belief that, as he **wrote for the *Guardian*** the case for keeping the BNP off the program would be “a case for censorship.” It’s a sentiment he echoed when the conversation turned to the backlash from readers over a recent *New York Times* **profile** of an American white nationalist. Following its publication, readers and other media outlets criticized the *Times* for seemingly “normalizing” the movement and its followers.

“We need an open debate in our society,” Thompson said. “You only turn against that if you don’t trust the public themselves to make reasonable decisions.

“You can’t understand anyone including your political opponents unless you listen,” he added.

Regarding the Weinstein scandal and the subsequent torrent of high profile men accused of sexual misconduct, Thompson said, “We knew it was quite a big story obviously, but the scale of it took everyone by surprise.” With each new day bringing a new, sordid story to light, Thompson said society is experiencing “a moment of massive release of something that has been pent up in many people’s lives.”

For those media critics who have accused traditional media of lapsing into irrelevancy, the *Times*’ recent investigative coups illustrate that the Old Gray Lady still packs a mighty punch. Its digital product has seen subscriptions increase, and Thompson is looking at a move to TV for the brand. But while the long term viability of its print product remains

Realscreen – December 1, 2017 (3 of 3)

shrouded in uncertainty, Thompson said the need for “even-handed” investigative journalism is stronger than ever. When asked if he had a strategy to combat the swelling tide of fake news, Thompson’s reply was swift.

“Yes, it’s called trying to do proper journalism.”

National Post – December 1, 2017

In Faces Places, Agnès Varda and JR spin the ordinary into the extraordinary

Chris Knight: Faces Places swivels from a documentation of an art project into a gentle meditation on the transitory nature of art, and indeed of life



Varda, JR.TIFF

Chris Knight

December 1, 2017

12:06 PM EST

Can a doc be defined as adorable? There seems no better appellation for Faces Places (French title: Visages, Villages), a breezy travelogue starring and directed by French film legend Agnès Varda and the large-scale photographer known as JR. (Who shot? JR!)

The two unlikely friends – Varda is 88, JR 33 – ramble around France in a cube van decorated to look like a giant camera, taking huge pictures of ordinary people and putting them in extraordinary places. Thus images of miners decorate the soon-to-be-demolished row houses where they once lived. Villagers appear to share the world's longest baguette. And the wives of dockworkers in the port of Le Havre loom like giants on the sides of shipping containers. Varda explains the purpose of their art in simple terms: "To meet new faces and photograph them so they don't fall down the holes in my memory."

But we sense there are few holes in her sharp mind; visiting Normandy, where she once photographed the late Guy Bourdin, she remembers the very spot where she set up her camera. Then she and JR paste a blowup of that photo on a ruined German bunker that pokes out of the beach like an inverted pyramid. The next day, the tide has washed away all trace of it. Gradually, Faces Places swivels from a documentation of an art project into a gentle meditation on the transitory nature of art, and indeed of life. It feels like an unplanned shift, but Varda is too clever for that. "Chance has always been my best assistant," she remarks at one point. That may be, but only when you are open to its whims does chance lend a hand. In this lovely film, it functions as the third star, and an invisible co-producer.

<http://nationalpost.com/entertainment/movies/in-faces-places-agnes-vara-and-jr-spin-the-ordinary-into-the-extraordinary>

Toronto Star – December 3, 2017

This week in Toronto: Electric Messiah, a Godot who shows and The Nutcracker

Our new, curated guide to the week's offerings also includes Emily Haines, historic drama Knightfall and The Virgin Suicides.

Sun., Dec. 3, 2017

WEDNESDAY

No Stone Unturned

Watch this if: You want a fresh look at the painful history of the Troubles.

On a June evening in 1994, two men in balaclavas came into a pub in the village of Loughinisland in Northern Ireland and shot 11 men, killing six. The crime remains unsolved, a fact that led American documentarian Alex Gibney to conduct his own investigation decades later. This December selection for Hot Docs' Doc Soup program uncovers evidence of a coverup by officials wary of the case's potential impact on the Northern Island peace process. Producer Trevor Birney will do Q&As after the two Wednesday screenings; Gibney joins him via Skype after Thursday's showing. (Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W., 6:30 and 9:15 p.m., also Thursday at 6:45 p.m.)

—*Jason Anderson*

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2017/12/03/this-week-in-toronto-electric-messiah-a-godot-who-shows-and-the-nutcracker.html>

WCSFP '17: Work smarter with tips from Silicon Valley

By Barry Walsh

December 4, 2017



This year's choice of venue for the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers — San Francisco — provided relatively easy access to a brain trust that is increasingly important to the content production community: the tech wizards of Silicon Valley.

One standing room only session, “Learning from Silicon Valley: How to Boost Your Creativity,” brought two denizens from the high tech hub on board, to share their approaches to creativity and productivity, and offer glimpses into potential futures.

On hand were Obi Felten, part of the team from X (formerly Google X), which is the division of the ever-expanding tech giant's parent company, Alphabet, responsible for such early-stage projects — or “moonshots” as they call such things over there — as self-driving cars, Google Glass and Project Loon (more on that later). She also has a title that would take up the bulk of a business card: “head of getting moonshots ready for contact with the real world.”

Also presenting was Jane McGonigal (pictured), a renowned game designer, author (*Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*) and current director of game research and development at the Palo Alto-based Institute for the Future. Her game, *SuperBetter*, has been used by those dealing with traumatic brain injury, anxiety and depression as part of their recovery processes.

Below, some takeaways from the discussion:

Realscreen – December 4, 2017 (2 of 3)

Put the emphasis on “failing gracefully on the path to success”

X’s Felten said that in order for her company to develop their “moonshot” technologies, team members have to become well acquainted with the possibility and probability of failure in order to decide which projects to keep working on, and which to abandon. Thus, she said it was necessary to reframe the experience, “from failing fast to learning fast.” She cited the team’s experience in developing the much-hyped Google Glass several years back. In 2013, prototypes were tested by “real people” outside of the company, and while the capabilities of “smart glasses,” including a built-in camera and the ability to access the Internet via voice command and touchpad, were deemed “nice to have” by the “Glass Explorers,” they weren’t seen as “need to haves.”

However, users from the B2B sector found aspects of it incredibly useful, and this past July, an “Enterprise Edition” was developed.

“Now it’s rising like a Phoenix from the ashes,” said Felten of the resurrected Glass.

Set “kill criteria” up front

What would make you shut your own project down? What would be the point where, after all the mental and physical toil, you kick it to the curb? It’s a good idea to decide upon that point early and stick to it, but to also be realistic about how many iterations a truly ambitious idea might need in order to work.

Felten discussed X’s Project Loon, an R&D project with the aim of bringing Internet access to rural and remote areas, and the approximately five billion people who have no access to the ‘Net. The project sends high-altitude balloons into the stratosphere to create an aerial wireless network, and has had several successful tests, including its most recent mission — delivering Internet access to some 100,000 individuals in hurricane-pummeled Puerto Rico. But before that happened, the X team had to arrive at the right material and design for the balloons. Myriad designs were tested, and many failed, but at an early enough stage to warrant further investigation.

Realscreen – December 4, 2017 (3 of 3)

“Creativity and innovation are really messy,” said Felten. “The key is learning how to deal with that messiness.”

“Any useful statement about the future should at first seem ridiculous.”

In her presentation, McGonigal used “Dator’s Law” from futurist Jim Dator to encourage delegates to “think about the future differently.” From a neurological standpoint, if you think about your 2027 self, it’s as if you’re thinking about a stranger, or a fiction — your medial pre-frontal cortex, which is part of the brain’s default mode network that deals with self-referential mental activity, fires up less when you think about your future self than when you think about your current self and its concerns.

“You can connect more to your future self by thinking about the future differently,” she advised. Using “first person thinking,” or facts such as how old you’ll be or how old your children will be in 2027, “connects you to your future self.”

To present one vision of the future, McGonigal showed a video “documentary” from the Institute of the Future, shot in the year 2027, depicting a new social network that gave users the ability to actually feel each other’s feelings. While VR is often called an “empathy machine” by its proponents, this fictional tech had users attach electrode-bearing headgear in order to have the feelings of others “beamed” into their brains.

At the end of the clip, when asked who in attendance felt uncomfortable about this possible future, the majority of delegates raised their hands. Interestingly, said McGonigal, younger people who have seen the video, and who have grown up in the social media era, are more welcoming of the idea.

The next edition of the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers will take place in Brisbane, the capital of Queensland, Australia.

Best independent movie theatres in Toronto

WhatsOn Dec 04, 2017 Toronto.com



- David John via TIFF/Photo

Get the popcorn and candy ready, and take a whirlwind tour of Toronto's best independent movie theatres.

Some are saturated in historic significance, while others have quirky qualities or special screenings that make the visit worthwhile. Whatever you choose, watching the silver screen has never been so fun with these six indie cinemas across the city.

The Royal Cinema

Built in 1939, the Royal Cinema is a historic Art Deco movie house located in Little Italy. Originally called the Pylon, this 390-seat theatre once included a roller-skating rink at the rear and a dance hall on the second floor. Today, the indie theatre retains the old-timey feel but presents movies that appeal to a wide range of cinematic tastes, as well as screenings, live concerts, and film festivals. Don't miss "Drunk Feminist Films," a comedy screening event whereby an audience full of feminists snark their way through "problematic moments in movies they love (or love to hate)."



David John via TIFF/Photo

TIFF Bell Lightbox

Toronto.com – December 4, 2017 (2 of 3)

The TIFF Bell Lightbox is Toronto's Shaq Daddy of cinemas. This ginormous contemporary cinema and cultural centre swallows up an entire city block on King Street West, housing five cinemas, two restaurants, exhibitions and galleries, and a film reference library. If you're looking for a sleek and chic venue to watch a flick, this is it: expect comfy seats, top quality sound and projection, and a box office calendar bursting with thought-provoking films and talks. Aside from the legendary Toronto International Film Festival, the cinema also hosts a ton of film festivals. Celebrate the best in Canuck cinema by attending the annual Canada's Top Ten Film Festival in January, or be moved to action at the annual Human Rights Watch Film Festival in April.

The Kingsway Theatre

Patrons love the "old-schoolness" of the Kingsway Theatre, a refurbished 1939 cinema that shows classic movies, foreign films, documentaries, and occasional blockbusters. There's also a kickass concession stand, serving everything from foamy pints to movie-inspired classic cocktails to ice cream in waffle cones. The perfect place for a quiet little date night or a nostalgic night out!



Gabriel Li via Hot Docs Cinema/Photo

Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Documentary lovers of the world unite...at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. This one-screen movie theatre is a year-round home for first-run Canadian and international documentaries, as well as special documentary presentations and showcases, such as the popular Doc Soup screening series. The building is also steeped in Toronto history, debuting as a film house in 1913 and making it one of the first picture palaces in Toronto. It might be old, but the cinema's interior has been recently updated to improve the film-watching experience, including an expanded lobby, a new sound system, and comfortable seating up for up to 710 patrons.

Regent Theatre

The Roaring Twenties live on at the Regent Theatre, a 1920-era cinema in Midtown Toronto that features independent and foreign films, as well as the occasional blockbusters. It was a real beauty back in the day: an opulent theatre adorned with decorative arches, ornate plaster trim, and small Venetian-style balconies for box seats. Aside from movies, the Regent occasionally plays host to live performances, from local stand-up comedy acts to music acts, often from the

Toronto.com – December 4, 2017 (3 of 3)

Balkan or Caucasus regions, or even broadcasts special events, like 24-hours of Le Mans or Election Night. Insider's Tip: The Regent only takes cash, so leave the debit and credit cards at home.

The Fox

On Toronto's east side, there's The Fox: a little theatre in the Beaches that first opened in 1914 and is reportedly Canada's longest-running cinema. Today, the theatre primarily offers "the best in contemporary, classic, and cult films," although it also hosts innovative events and "thought-provoking, community-minded programming." Bonus: The Fox serves craft beer and wine to accompany your popcorn.



The Revue Cinema/Photo

The Revue Cinema

Built at the turn of the twentieth century, the Revue Cinema is Toronto's oldest standing cinema still in use and officially designated as a heritage site. Located on Roncesvalles Avenue, the 236-seat theatre began showing films in 1912, screens all the latest Hollywood and art house fare and also functions today as a non-profit cultural community organization that raises awareness of social causes. Within the walls dripping with Edwardian and Art Deco charm, cinephiles will find everything playing from feature films to classic black and whites to the Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival. For the true cinephiles, the Revue Cinema is one of the few places left in town equipped for 35mm and 16mm projections. The cinema also hosts various special event series, such as Silent Revue, where films from the silent era are accompanied by live piano; and Food in Film, where culinary-focused flicks are paired with snacks from some of the city's top chefs. Keep your eyes peeled for free community screenings of your favourite films!

Original Cin – December 7, 2017 (1 of 2)

CHAVELA: DOCUMENTARY DISTILLS ACCLAIMED SINGER'S TUMULTUOUS LIFE

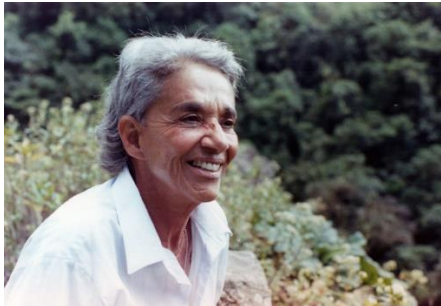
December 7, 2017

By Liam Lacey

Rating: B

"Goodbye volcano," wrote director Pedro Almodóvar on Facebook when the singer Chavela Vargas died in 2012 at the age of 93. "Volcanic" is an apt description for Chavela's voice which, while husky and caressing, seemed wrenched from fathomless depths of emotion. Almodóvar — who used Chavela's songs in several of his films — championed her career comeback in her late decades, and revered her as his androgynous muse.

Given the number of decades Chavela performed, and her high profile in her later years, you'd assume there would be a wealth of interview material with her. Apparently not. In 1991, Catherine Gund did a filmed interview with the singer, and that somewhat blurry footage is the centrepiece of this documentary. It's embellished with talking-head interviews, photographs, and archival clips, including a welcome sampling of Chavela's grandly soulful performances over the years.



The great Chavela Vargas.

Though somewhat repetitive in its awestruck tone, Gund and co-director Daresha Kyi's film does an effective job of showing how Chavela's life was as intense as her music. Born in Costa Rica, she came to Mexico City as a teenager, first singing (like Edith Piaf) on the streets before moving cabarets, nightclubs and movies.

Original Cin – December 7, 2017 (2 of 2)

A serial seducer of women, she had a relationship with artist Frida Kahlo, and a one-night stand with Ava Gardner during Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor's wedding in Acapulco. As various friends and lovers attest, Chavela made it a point to out-romance and out-drink her male colleagues. Eventually, the tequila took its toll and she lost more than a dozen years go booze before her comeback in her early 70s.

Early photos show her as a beauty in the traditional Mexican movie style, with long hair, a frilly hoop skirt and jewellery, but she said the feminine clothes made her feel as though she were a transvestite. She switched to her trademark performing uniform of a poncho and pants, with a single braid (which was later cut off.) Her speciality was Ranchera love songs, often written by her friend and fellow alcohol casualty, José Alfredo Jiménez.

Key interviews include a former lover, the human rights lawyer, Alicia Perez Duarte, who helped rescue Chavela from drinking (though the singer credited a shaman). Perez is blunt about the struggle between Chavela's "magical" allure and the challenge of living with someone "who didn't need to be drunk to be violent." But mostly the film downplays Chavela's mean streak to focus on her artistic boldness and tragic mystique.

"She was like a priestess," says Almodóvar. "She absolved you of your sins. Then she encouraged you to commit them again."

Chavela. Directed by Catherine Gund and Daresha Ki. Starring Chavela Vargas, Pedro Almodóvar and Alicia Perez Duarte. Opens December 8 through to December 17 at Toronto's Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

<https://www.original-cin.ca/posts/2017/12/7/chavela-documentary-distills-acclaimed-singers-tumultuous-life-and-famous-lovers>

Hot Docs Names Cara Mertes 2018 Doc Mogul

Posted on December 12th, 2017 • [0 Comments](#)

[Embed from Getty Images](#)

By Pat Mullen

Hot Docs has named Cara Mertes the recipient of the Doc Mogul Award for its 2018 festival. The Doc Mogul prize honours a peer in the industry who has made significant contributions to the art and business of documentary. Mertes is the director of the JustFilms initiative at the Ford Foundation and through the role has displayed a significant commitment to socially engaged documentary. Her work with the JustFilms initiative includes fostering an environment for inclusive independent filmmaking and encouraging the growth of emerging voices and media worldwide. Films supported by JustFilms include *Bending the Arc*, *Whose Streets?*, *When Two Worlds Collide*, *Best of Enemies*, *This Changes Everything*, and Oscar-winner *Citizenfour*.

Mertes also served as director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program and Fund for eight years, was the executive producer of the PBS documentary series *POV* (no relation) for which she won a Primetime Emmy and three News and Documentary Emmys, and created and produced PBS' first on-line web series, *Borders*, which earned her a Webby.

"Hot Docs is one of the most vibrant engines for momentum in the international independent documentary eco-system, and it's a great honor to be recognized in their 25th year for work that has been, for me over that same period, both a calling and a professional trajectory," said Mertes in a statement from the festival. "None of this has happened alone. I have been very fortunate to have been mentored and supported by extraordinary cultural and media leaders. Women in particular have been important role models. In turn, over my career as an independent media maker, in public media, in the non-profit world and now in philanthropy, I have tried to foster new opportunities and resources for underrepresented and transformative moving image makers and support visionary, inclusive leadership for the future of this work. I believe these are the stories and the leaders who are the key to creating a path through the current challenges the world faces."

"Cara's dedication to building a global non-fiction community and accelerating progressive change through filmic storytelling has been unparalleled," added Ryan Harrington, acting director of industry programs for Hot Docs. "Her leadership and vision has led her to build new networks, champion hundreds of filmmakers and empower and build thought-leading

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – December 12, 2017 (2 of 2)

organizations around the world. Her contribution to the documentary film community has been invaluable, and we're delighted to recognize her work with this award."

Mertes will receive her award at Hot Docs on Monday, April 30. The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival runs April 26-May 6. Next year's festival marks the 25th anniversary of Hot Docs

Hot Docs names Cara Mertes as 2018 Doc Mogul

By **Daniele Alcinii**
December 13, 2017



Cara Mertes, director of the JustFilms initiative at the Ford Foundation, will receive this year's Doc Mogul Award during the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival.

The honor celebrates individuals who have “made an essential contribution to the creative vitality of the documentary industry, both at home and abroad.”

“Cara’s dedication to building a global non-fiction community and accelerating progressive change through filmic storytelling has been unparalleled,” said **Ryan Harrington**, acting director of industry programs for Hot Docs, in a statement. “Her leadership and vision has led her to build new networks, champion hundreds of filmmakers and empower and build thought-leading organizations around the world. Her contribution to the documentary film community has been invaluable, and we’re delighted to recognize her work with this award.”

As the director of JustFilms since 2013, Mertes has been responsible for fulfilling the Ford Foundation’s commitment to film as a critical social justice strategy and has expanded JustFilms from a documentary fund to a field-funding initiative that supports indie film and emerging media worldwide. She has also spearheaded the Ford Foundation’s funding for

Realscreen – December 13, 2017 (2 of 3)

250-plus projects for stories that underscore human dignity and justice, including **Laura Poitras'** Academy Award-winning film ***Citizenfour***.

Through JustFilms, Mertes has supported fellowships for industry leaders, created opportunities for filmmakers to work with journalists, and expanded the emerging media landscape with the recent Making A New Reality report and a set of VR labs for makers of color.

Prior to this, Mertes served as director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program and Fund over an eight-year period, where she developed year-round labs and fellows programs, and incubated initiatives focused on deeper understandings social change, including the Good Pitch models created by DocSociety.

Previously, she worked at PBS's documentary strand 'POV', where she executive produced such Oscar-nominated films as *Street Fight*, *Nerakkoon: Betrayal* and *My Country, My Country*.

"None of this has happened alone. I have been very fortunate to have been mentored and supported by extraordinary cultural and media leaders," added Mertes. "Women in particular have been important role models. In turn, over my career as an independent media maker, in public media, in the non-profit world and now in philanthropy, I have tried to foster new opportunities and resources for underrepresented and transformative moving image makers and support visionary, inclusive leadership for the future of this work. I believe these are the stories and the leaders who are the key to creating a path through the current challenges the world faces."

Hot Docs, which celebrates its 25th festival anniversary this spring, will present Mertes with the honor at a luncheon on April 30.

Realscreen – December 13, 2017 (3 of 3)

Past recipients include SODEC's **Monique Simard** (2017), **likka Vehkalahti**, formerly of YLE (2016), NHK'S Takahiro Hamano (2015), DR TV's **Mette Hoffmann Meyer** (2014), Women Make Movies' **Debra Zimmerman** (2013), Participant Media's **Diane Weyermann** (2012) and IDFA's **Ally Derks** (2011).

The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival takes place from April 26 to May 6 in Toronto.

Cara Mertes Named Hot Docs' 2018 Doc Mogul

BY Laura Berger December 13, 2017

Cara Mertes is set to be honored at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, POV Magazine reports. The director of the JustFilms initiative at the Ford Foundation will receive the Dog Mogul Award, a prize that “honors a peer in the industry who has made significant contributions to the art and business of documentary.”

Mertes previously served as director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program and Fund, and was an executive producer on PBS' doc series “POV.” “Her work with the JustFilms initiative includes fostering an environment for inclusive independent filmmaking and encouraging the growth of emerging voices and media worldwide,” the source writes. Laura Poitras' Oscar-winning Edward Snowden doc “Citizenfour” is among the titles that's received support from JustFilms, as is Sabaah Folayan and Damon Davis' “Whose Streets?” which offers a look into the lives of everyday St. Louisans in the aftermath of Michael Brown's fatal shooting by a police officer.

“Hot Docs is one of the most vibrant engines for momentum in the international independent documentary eco-system, and it's a great honor to be recognized in their 25th year for work that has been, for me over that same period, both a calling and a professional trajectory,” said Mertes. The Emmy winner continued, “None of this has happened alone. I have been very fortunate to have been mentored and supported by extraordinary cultural and media leaders. Women in particular have been important role models,” she emphasized. “In turn, over my career as an independent media maker, in public media, in the non-profit world and now in philanthropy, I have tried to foster new opportunities and resources for underrepresented and transformative moving image makers and support visionary, inclusive leadership for the future of this work. I believe these are the stories and the leaders who are the key to creating a path through the current challenges the world faces.”

Women and Hollywood – December 13, 2017 (2 of 2)

“Cara’s dedication to building a global non-fiction community and accelerating progressive change through filmic storytelling has been unparalleled,” added Ryan Harrington, acting director of industry programs for Hot Docs. “Her leadership and vision has led her to build new networks, champion hundreds of filmmakers, and empower and build thought-leading organizations around the world. Her contribution to the documentary film community has been invaluable, and we’re delighted to recognize her work with this award.”

Previous winners of the Doc Mogul Award include Debra Zimmerman (Women Make Movies), Ally Derks (IDFA), and Sheila Nevins (HBO).

Hot Docs’ 2018 edition will run from April 26-May 6. Mertes will receive her honor on April 30. The lineup for the fest hasn’t been revealed yet.

'Twas the week before Christmas: Subway comes to York Region this weekend

BY NEWS STAFF

POSTED DEC 13, 2017 12:42 PM EDT

LAST UPDATED DEC 15, 2017 AT 8:42 AM EDT



The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre subway station on Nov. 28, 2017. CITYNEWS



Christmas comes a week early for TTC riders. Starting on Sunday, subway riders will be able to journey past Sheppard West station and into York Region.

Aside from the subway celebration, there are lots of things to be happy about this weekend. Christmas Day is just around the corner and the festivities are all around us.

Big TTC news

Subway line extends to York

Construction on the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE) started in 2008, and at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, the dream will become a reality. Line 1 has been expanded 8.6 kilometres and six stations past Sheppard West Station, to York University and north to the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The six new subway stations are: Downsview Park, Finch West, York University, Pioneer Village, Highway 407, and Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The extension also includes commuter parking lots as well as TTC, York Region and GO bus terminals.

Ahead of the subway line opening, an open house will be held at Finch West Station (3950 Keele St.) on Saturday, giving TTC riders a chance to preview the subway station. The open house is from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors can tour the station and learn how it was built.

City News – December 13, 2017 (2 of 2)

Festive events

Foodie Holiday Market

If you're looking for inspiration to wow your guests this holiday season, then look no further than the Foodie Holiday Market. The third annual celebration of tasty treats at the Toronto Botanical Gardens will feature more than 40 local vendors showing off their best in artisan food. You'll have a chance to try samples, and shop for delicious stocking stuffers. The event runs both Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door, and children under 12 are free. Bring your appetite!

Holiday movies

"So if you really love Christmas, c'mon and let it snow" ... if you watched the movie, *Love Actually*, you know this reference. Everyone has their favourite Christmas movie, and chances are one of them is playing at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema this weekend and until Dec. 22. Some of the other classic movies include: National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation, A Christmas Story, Elf, and The Holiday. And the best part of all is that the movies are free — a limit of two tickets per person — but you are encouraged to make a donation to the The Stop Community Food Centre.

Holiday Gift Swap

Are you looking to save a few dollars on gifts this year? Or maybe get rid of that present you got last year that you never use? Luckily for you, Toronto's Holiday Gift Swap is back this weekend for its fifth year. Greenpeace and the Toronto Tool Library are teaming up to bring Torontonians together to swap to find the perfect gift for that special someone. The swap is on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Beer Pong

Finally, all those beer pong tournaments you played in college have finally paid off! A beer pong championship tournament will be hosted downtown Saturday night. The "beer pong championship of the world" round robin tournament will see teams face off for a cash prize and bragging rights. It will be held at 117 Tecumseth St. and starts at 9 p.m.

She Does the City – December 14, 2017

OUR PICK OF THE WEEK: HOME ALONE QUOTE-ALONG

POSTED ON DECEMBER 14, 2017

Is there a more quotable Christmas movie than *Home Alone*? I think not.

Throw on those ugly Christmas sweaters and head to Bloor Hot Docs Cinema (506 Bloor St. W.) this Friday, December 15th, for the fourth annual *Home Alone* Quote-Along! The John Hughes holiday classic will be screened with subtitles, karaoke-style, so you can shout out your favourite lines ("Buzz, your girlfriend...WOOF!"), scream with Kevin McCallister, and root against the Wet Bandits. The theatre will also be accepting donations of rice or dried beans (or cash) in support of The Stop Community Food Centre.

Tickets are \$11.50 each or \$18 with a can of Mill Street and a large popcorn. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. and the screening begins at 9:30.

<http://www.shedoesthecity.com/pick-week-home-alone-quote-along>

Bluefin tuna in Atlantic Canada are no longer afraid of humans — and that's a bad sign

A new documentary portrays the remarkable species as a symbol of a “precariously broken” ocean ecosystem



Documentary film “Bluefin” explores the mystery of why wild giant tuna will approach fishing boats and eat bait from a human hand. (Image courtesy National Film Board)

By Alexandra Pope

December 15, 2017

The documentary films *The Cove* and *Blackfish* brought global awareness to the plight of dolphins and killer whales, respectively; now, the team behind a new Canadian doc hopes their film will do the same for bluefin tuna.

Produced by the National Film Board and written and directed by John Hopkins, *Bluefin* explores the changing relationship between these warm-blooded ocean giants and the men and women who depend on Prince Edward Island’s tuna fishery for their livelihood. Hopkins spent five years filming at sea and in the tiny town of North Lake, P.E.I., known as the “tuna capital of the world,” for the monster 500-kilogram fish that are routinely caught off its shores. In that time, he witnessed an unsettling phenomenon: the bluefin tuna of the eastern Atlantic are so starved, they will approach fishing boats and take bait from a human hand. One fisherman in the film likens the behaviour to a pet begging for a treat.

This incredible survival strategy masks a disturbing reality: bluefin tuna may seem locally abundant, but oceanwide, scientists estimate their numbers have been reduced by as much as 90 per cent, largely due to overfishing and declining forage fish stocks.

“From top predators to baitfish schools that support much of the wildlife at sea, including giant bluefin, whales and sea birds, I found a food chain here in our ocean that is precariously broken,” Hopkins says.

Canadian Geographic – December 15, 2017 (2 of 2)

Through stunning underwater footage, the film also highlights some of the amazing abilities of the tuna, including top swimming speeds of more than 60 kilometres per hour and a highly efficient internal thermoregulation system that allows them to hunt in the icy waters of the North Atlantic.

“Tuna have been completely off our radar,” Hopkins says. “We are wired to think of them only as food, not extraordinary wildlife. It’s time we finally understood what these incredible creatures truly are.”

Following a successful run on the international festival circuit, *Bluefin* will have its Toronto premiere on Tuesday, Dec. 19 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema as part of Hot Docs’ Films Changing the World series. Hopkins will take questions from the audience following the screening. Tickets are available through the Hot Docs box office. Watch the film trailer below:

<https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/bluefin-tuna-atlantic-canada-are-no-longer-afraid-humans-and-thats-bad-sign>

Three Daniel Caesar shows, a *Die Hard* quote-a-long and seven other things to see, do, hear and read over the next two weeks

BY [WILL SLOAN](#) AND [GERALD HANNON](#) | DECEMBER 18, 2017



Photograph by George Pimentel

Daniel Caesar's musical marathon

1The best-kept secret of Toronto's R&B renaissance is, well, no longer a secret. One sold-out concert quickly ballooned into a string of five shows this month (there are just three left), where hometown throngs will hear Caesar's buzzy debut album, *Freudian*, in full for the first time. It's overflowing with slow jams, including the breakout earworm "Get You," as well as uplifting anthems like the back-to-back singles "We Find Love" and "Blessed." When every other moody 20-something in town is trying to sound like The Weeknd, Caesar's optimistic tunes are refreshingly bright and beautiful. To Wednesday, December 20. \$22–\$28. *Danforth Music Hall*.

A *Die Hard* quote-along

2Yippee ki-yay, moviegoers: this year, you can quip along with John McClane and Hans Gruber at Hot Docs' screening of everybody's favourite Christmas movie. The night features festive drinks and a pre-show hosted by comedian Thomas Rivas. Saturday, December 23 and Sunday, December 24. \$18. *Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema*.

A hit-filled Serena Ryder show

3Two years after releasing her platinum hit "Stompa," Juno-winning singer-songwriter Serena

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Ryder stomps onto the stage of the Danforth Music Hall, wrapping up a tour in support of the dual release of her sixth album, *Utopia*, and her EP *Electric Love*. On recent tour stops, she's wasted no time getting to the hits, including "What I Wouldn't Do" and "Weak in the Knees." Friday, December 22. \$53. *Danforth Music Hall*.



Photograph courtesy of Paramount Pictures

An absurd Toronto-shot satire

4CityPlace, York University and the Aga Khan Museum all get a star turn in *Downsizing*, a Toronto-shot social satire from director Alexander Payne (*Election*, *Sideways*). It stars Matt Damon and Kristen Wiig as a stunted middle-class couple who decide to undergo a bizarre medical procedure that shrinks them down to the size of G.I. Joes—a radical solution to global overpopulation. The fun is in watching the film play out the implications of life at five inches: miniature homes are cheaper, dinners are crumb-sized, and border guards bite their nails over the threat of tiny terrorists sneaking into their country. It's an outrageous premise, but the bite-size comedy packs giant ideas about capitalism, consumerism and conformity. In theatres Friday, December 22.

Movies the way they were meant to be seen

5Some movies just aren't the same on Netflix. The TIFF Bell Lightbox's annual Magnificent 70mm festival returns with more classic movies projected on glorious 70mm film, including

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Lawrence of Arabia, *E.T.*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *The Thing*, *Vertigo*, two recent Christopher Nolan hits and more. Saturday, December 23 to Sunday, January 7. \$17. *TIFF Bell Lightbox*.

A solstice parade in Kensington Market

6It's the longest night of the year, so you might as well have a party. The 28th annual Kensington Market Winter Solstice Parade turns the eclectic neighbourhood into a spectacle of fire-breathers, shadow plays, lanterns, and more. Thursday, December 21. Free. *Kensington Market*.



Photograph courtesy of the TSO

A mighty Messiah

7The TSO has performed the Messiah for more holiday seasons than we can count, but they keep things fresh with guest conductors. This year, Matthew Halls, formerly of the Oregon Bach Festival, leads the orchestra, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and a quartet of soloists through a modified score with a massive Victorian-era sound. Monday, December 18 to Saturday, December 23. \$52–\$113. *Roy Thomson Hall*.

A Yeezy Christmas

8Two days after Christians celebrate the birth of the son of God, Toronto celebrates the man who claimed, “I am a God.” Track and Field’s Kanye Westivus offers all the Yeezy you can handle: a *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy/Yeezus* listening party, two hours of Kanye deep

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cuts and a late-night dance-party. Proceeds support Sistering, a local charity supporting marginalized women. Wednesday, December 27. \$10. *Track and Field*.

An icy New Year's Eve party

9Toronto's largest New Year's Eve bash (on ice, that is) is the Skate and Dance Party at Harbourfront Centre's Natrel Rink. DJs will spin everything from disco to EDM to salsa in anticipation of the new year. Sunday, December 31. Free. *Harbourfront Centre*.

MythBusters' Jon Lung & Brian Louden

[Joanna Padovano Tong](#) 1 day ago [Interviews](#), [Top Stories](#)

December 20, 2017

After presenting the “What’s the Buzz?” session at this year’s World Congress of Science & Factual Producers, *MythBusters* hosts Jon Lung and Brian Louden spoke with *TV Real* about the new iteration of the show, which debuted last month on Science Channel.

The original *MythBusters* saw Jamie Hyneman and Adam Savage debunk myths using science on Discovery Channel from 2003 to 2016. After its finale, Discovery’s sister network Science revealed its plans to continue the Emmy-winning series, with the new presenters named at the end of the reality competition *MythBusters: The Search*. The winners were Jon Lung, who hails from Staten Island, New York, and Brian Louden, a native of Spring, Texas.

TV REAL: What was it like being selected for *MythBusters: The Search* and then finding out that you landed the job as co-hosts?

LUNG: Brian and I have been 14-year fans of *MythBusters*, from the very first burnt eyebrow on Adam Savage all the way



to the end, when they essentially drove a plow truck they had built through all the props they had acquired over 14 years. I was in grad school when I found out that Adam and Jamie retired, and I was Googling “MythBusters” at least once a week. I found out Jamie Hyneman was working on all these cool projects, and Adam Savage was doing a ton of stuff. And then one time I looked it up and I found out that there was an application to search for the next generation of MythBusters. I thought it was a joke and I was like, Oh, what are the odds? And so I finished my last two months of graduate school, got my master’s, went back and found out the application was still up and I said, Hey, what the heck? I should do it—I love this kind of stuff! I applied and like a week later they got back to me.

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LOUDEN: [I had] mostly the same start: 14-year fan, watching *MythBusters* from the very first episode to that very last minute. It was sort of always what I wanted to do. I became a paramedic and did all these different jobs, and then I was sitting around and I'd actually lost my job in the oil business because the whole market crashed and I was just thinking, What am I going to do next? I was looking for something good and I got this email from my mom with a link to the *MythBusters: The Search* application. So I have my mom to thank for the fact that I knew it existed. Of course when your mom sends you something like that, you can think all day that there's no chance, but you're still going to definitely fill it out. After a Skype interview and a phone call, the next thing I know, everything else is on TV!

TV REAL: What has it been like filming the new version of *MythBusters*? Is there a lot of pressure for you to live up to the global success and longevity of the original?

LUNG: It's less about the pressure and more about the honor of continuing a legacy. What made us big fans of the original *MythBusters* to begin with was the commitment to making science and engineering and design so accessible. They learned, they made mistakes, and you'd all learn together watching on TV. And so to be able to continue that legacy—and hopefully make science and engineering and design just as accessible as our predecessors did—is pretty exciting.

TV REAL: What is the process that goes into selecting the myths that you debunk in each episode?

LOUDEN: The great thing is, there are always myths out there and they're coming from every direction. And so really, it's less about finding the myths and more about finding the myths that make [sense for] *MythBusters*, where we have a unique process that we have to go through. We need myths that are going to have a story that we can tell over time, that are going to have small-scale testing that leads us into the big-scale, and then, of course, some big-scale tests that we can perform. So, we get these myths from left, right, up, down, and then we get together as a group, where basically everybody associated at all in our shop, in production, or anything, gets together and figures out what's good and how we are going to develop it. Then [Jon and I go] over to the producers and directors, we narrow it down once we've selected some and pick our absolute myth.

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TV REAL: How is the reboot different from the original version? Are there just as many car crashes and explosions as there used to be?

LOUDEN: Booms, bangs, gunshots and all that, they're a tactical piece of *MythBusters*; they're there no matter what because of what we're testing. So, our format's the same. Our look has more or less the same [style], but a new shop that's Jon's and mine. From the start, you'll notice it's very empty, and then you'll watch it grow with us as we grow as *MythBusters*. What's really different is not *MythBusters*, but simply just me and Jon, because you're taking people who have totally different backgrounds and asking them to do the same sort of research and the same sort of experimentation. So, we're going to have these crazy, unique views to do them, and I think that's pretty awesome.

TV REAL: Have you received any feedback or advice from Jamie Hyneman and Adam Savage?

LUNG: I'm still holding out to meet Jamie Hyneman. I know that he spends time in the shop and he does all these projects. But Brian and I had the honor of meeting Adam Savage twice—once in the very beginning of the search, before the cameras even got picked up. We were in orientation, and he was actually nice enough to stop by just to give all the contestants a bit of advice. He said, No one really knows what's going to happen here, but the most important thing you can do is to be yourself and have fun because the audience can tell if you're faking it. Brian and I have said that we've taken that advice full-heartedly from that moment all the way until now. I think that's what kind of helped us get to the position we are in now as *MythBusters*. We did a panel at New York Comic Con, and then we had the pleasure of meeting Adam in person, a true meet-and-greet, just one on two, and [we said], We've looked up to you for 14 years and you gave us this advice and we stuck to it, and I think that's what helped us get here. And he was like, Whoa, that's fantastic to hear! He is an absolutely lovely man and that was absolutely amazing.

TV REAL: Even though you've never been on TV before, you both have a great on-screen presence and chemistry. Was that something you had to build up to or did it happen right away?

LOUDEN: That's a question we get a lot. It's sort of that same question of, Are you friends in real life? [Laughs] The thing about that is for *The Search*, they went out and got ten people who are very alike, so you're going to find people who are interested in the same things. When you sit those ten down and give them eight weeks of intense, crazy, peer-building but challenging

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things [to do], you come out of that—no matter what—friends, basically. When it comes to *MythBusters* now, Jon and I are still friends. We do everything together at work, we travel together; we love spending time together.

TV REAL: In this age of fake news, is it more important now than ever to separate fact from fiction and educate viewers on common misconceptions?

LOUDEN: There's definitely an age of fake news, alternative fact and all that's going on right now, but that's something that's just spread by those terms. Those ideas have always been there, with people always believing them, which is why the importance of *MythBusters* and testing real-world things to understand what's real and what's myth will always be important. So, it's absolutely important now, but even if the climate changed, it would always be absolutely important.

What's open in Toronto on Christmas Day 2017

Here's what to do on December 25

BY **SAMANTHA EDWARDS**

DECEMBER 21, 2017

11:45 AM



Benson Kua

While most restaurants, art galleries, museums, theatres, shops and venues are closed on Christmas Day, there's still a handful of events happening around the city on December 25. Whether you don't celebrate Christmas or you need a break from your extended family, here are nine things to do on Christmas Day.

See a movie at Cineplex

For lots of families, seeing a movie on Christmas Day is as much of a tradition as turkey dinner. Cineplex theatres across the city are open, so go see Oscar favourites **Molly's Game** and **Downsizing**, both of which open on Christmas Day. If you want to get into the holiday spirit, go see the 10 pm screening of Die Hard at Yonge & Dundas. (If Bruce Willis doesn't scream Christmas for you, the Y&D is also playing It's a Wonderful Life). See **movie listings** for details.

Go to the aquarium

On Christmas Day, expect fewer crowds at the Ripley's Aquarium. This means you won't have to curse middle schoolers on field trips roughhousing in the "Dangerous Lagoon" (aka the

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underwater tunnel) and you'll be able to take as many artsy photos in front of the jellyfish exhibit as your heart desires. Admission from \$12. See [website](#) for details.

Watch the world's best commercials at Hot Docs Cinema

At the Ted Rogers Hot Docs Cinema, watch the crème de la crème of commercials from the Cannes Lion International Festival of Creativity. These ads range from the hilarious and quirky to the sentimental. Then stick around for a screening of [Ramen Heads](#), an in-depth look into the noodle soup and top ramen chef, Osamu Tomita.

Christmas Flower Show at the Allan Gardens Conservatory

Until January 7, Allan Gardens gets transformed into a tropical Christmas paradise. The show features more than 30 varieties of poinsettia on top of thousands of over flowering blooms. Admission is free. See [website](#) for details.

Disney on Ice at the Rogers Centre

You know the drill here: Marvel as Elsa, Belle, Mickey, Minnie, Donald Duck, Ariel and the rest of the gang as they skate to Disney classic songs. See [website](#) for details.

Go skating at Nathan Phillips Square

Whether you're inspired by [I, Tonya](#) or Disney On Ice, go skating at Nathan Phillips Square. If you don't have your own blades, you can still rent them at the rink on Christmas Day. See [website](#) for details.

Eat and shop at the Pacific Mall

On Christmas Day, make the trek to Markham and go shopping at Pacific Mall, the largest Chinese mall in North America. When you need to refuel, feast on hot pot at Emperor Hot Pot. 11 am to 8 pm. See [website](#) for details.

Festivus dinner at The Drake Hotel

Sure, Festivus actually takes places on December 23, but we'll forgive the Drake because their [annual event](#) celebrating the secular Seinfeld holiday is always so delicious. This year's feast includes all the fixings: roasted turkey and cider glazed ham, stuffing, squash with pecans,

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shaved Brussels sprouts, mashed potatoes, all topped with cranberry sauce and gravy. Afterwards, make Frank Constanza proud and air your grievances to all your loved ones. \$35. See [website](#) for details.

Dance at Swan Dive

After you're properly stuffed with turkey and mashed potatoes, go dancing at the Dundas West bar, Swan Dive. On Christmas night, they're playing rock, post punk, psych music. They've officially dubbed the night "Festivus for the Rest of Us" and are currently trying to find an aluminum pole, i.e. the symbol of Festivus. Free. 10 pm. See [listing](#) for details.

This week in Toronto: 2017's last thrills include the Dude, the Doctor and a D.C. rapper

Our curated guide to the week's offerings also includes everyone from rapper Goldlink to Maria von Trapp.



Jeff Bridges, Steve Buscemi and John Goodman in *The Big Lebowski*. (EI SCAN)

Mon., Dec. 25, 2017

WEDNESDAY

Doctor Who

Watch this if: You want to ring out the old Doctor and ring in the new.

If you were too busy to see the *Doctor Who* Christmas special “Twice Upon a Time” on the Space channel on Christmas Day, you can catch up at your local Cineplex. It’s Peter Capaldi’s last episode as the Time Lord and the first for his replacement Jodie Whittaker (*Broadchurch*), the first female Doctor. Capaldi will team up for his final adventure with a previous incarnation of the Doctor played by David Bradley (a.k.a. *Game of Thrones*’ Walder Frey) and erstwhile companion Bill (Pearl Mackie). And cinema viewers will get bonus features, including a behind-the-scenes look at filming, and a tribute to Capaldi and showrunner Steven Moffat, who’s also leaving the series. (Various Cineplex theatres beginning at 12:30 p.m., see cineplex.com for details)

—Debra Yeo

THURSDAY

Jurassic Park in Concert

Watch this if: You read the book, saw the movie, got the ringtone.

You might be interested in

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Steven Spielberg's 1993 blockbuster spawned a franchise, with the latest instalment coming this June. But if you can't wait for that, this replay to a live orchestra accompaniment should be on your list. Conductor Evan Mitchell handled the baton for last year's *E.T.* in this series and he's back to coax every little ounce of emotion out of John Williams' typically majestic, heart-tugging score. Come early; it's general seating and this opening night of the two-night engagement includes a pre-show commentary from Mitchell and film critic Richard Crouse. (Sony Centre, 1 Front St. E., 7:30 p.m., sonycentre.ca)

—Chris Young

FRIDAY

Goldlink, River Tiber

Watch this if: New R&B just doesn't sound new enough for you.

Washington, D.C. rapper Goldlink's 2017 has been one of steady ascent, starting with debut LP *At What Cost*, continuing through heavy touring and capped with a Grammy nomination last month for the record's swaying lead single "Crew." On its own, his hip hop-meets-EDM "future bounce" hybrid stands out from the crowd and would be enough to attract interest; the guy can sing, too, though with his live set barely touching an hour it's no wonder he's brought some friends. That would be Atlanta rapper J. I. D and T.O. singer-composer River Tiber, the latter of whom has been putting out fresh sounds pretty much non-stop over the past few years and just last week was among Daniel Caesar's guests at his coming-out party. (Mod Club, 722 College St., 8 p.m., ticketmaster.ca)

—C.Y.

Sing-a-Long-a Sound of Music

Watch this if: You want to release your inner Von Trapp.

The Lightbox doesn't have any hills, but its halls will most definitely be alive with whatever sounds leak out of the cinema hosting TIFF's most cherished seasonal tradition. The 1965 screen musical starring Julie Andrews as a clearly overworked yet indefatigably cheerful governess, *The Sound of Music* is presented in all its Technicolor glory with vocal accompaniment supplied by you, the audience. Patrons are also encouraged to dress up as their favourite characters so feel free to break out the lederhosen. There are screenings on Dec. 30 and 31, too. (TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St. W., tiff.net)

—Jason Anderson

SATURDAY

Room for Mystics

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See this if: The season of light has you feeling dark.

Holidays being what they are, we can all use a bit of a breather from the avalanche of consumption/family/gluttony that this time of year inevitably becomes. That makes the timing of “Room for Mystics,” Sandra Meigs’ soothingly magical exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the perfect balm for what ails you. Thirty-odd paintings bathed in warm light, with the accompanying burble of long, low musical tones, are just the thing to put you back on kilter and keep the holiday blues at bay. (Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas St. W., until Jan. 14, ago.net)

—Murray Whyte

Here

See this if: Your Canada isn’t all maple syrup and beavers

In the art world, Canada 150 brought about less heartfelt tributes to the true north, strong and free than the paroxysms of an identity crisis: about what, exactly, “Canadian” actually is and, more importantly, who does it exclude? Here, a cross-section of Canadian artists from an array of diaspora, serves as a quietly clarifying challenge to our Eurocentric view: that there are many ways to be Canadian, with more cropping up all the time. (Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr., until Jan. 7, agakhanmuseum.org)

—M.W.

SUNDAY

The Dude’s New Year

Watch this if: You want to spend the big night in a bathrobe . . . in public

Every New Year’s Eve, the city’s self-styled dudes, nihilists and “little achievers” converge on the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema for a raucous showing of *The Big Lebowski*, the Coen brothers’ cult comedy starring Jeff Bridges as an entirely accidental detective. The festivities include live comedy by host Thomas Rivas as well as a White Russian Express Bar. As always, sunglasses and bathrobes are the recommended attire, though truly stylish patrons will opt for a purple bowling jumpsuit just like John Turturro as Jesus. (Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W., 9:30 p.m., hotdocscinema.ca)

—J.A.

New Year’s comedy specials

Watch this if: You figure laughing at 2017 is better than crying.

The veteran of New Year’s Eve satire, the Air Farce, celebrates its 25th year-ending comedy special with *Air Farce New Year’s Eve 2017*. Look for founding troupe members Don Ferguson

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and Luba Goy, along with Jessica Holmes, Craig Lauzon, Darryl Hinds, Chris Wilson, Isabel Kanaan and newbie Lisa Gilroy to skewer everything from President Trump to Quebec's anti-burka law and *The Handmaid's Tale* (CBC at 8 p.m.). Then it's the Beaverton's turn with *The Beaverton's Year in Review: 2017, The Year That Sadly Was*. Co-anchored by Emma Hunter and Miguel Rivas, the special will take aim at both Trump and Trudeau along with lots of other targets. (CTV at 10 p.m., also airing Jan. 1 at 10 p.m. on the Comedy Network)

—D.Y.

Bad Dog Theatre's New Year's Eve Theatresports

Watch this if: Your resolution is to laugh more in 2018.

Toronto's favourite unscripted theatre is giving NYE-goers two all-star shows to catch to close 2017 on a lighter note. Their signature improv show Theatresports starts at 8 p.m., featuring performers like Dan Beirne, Kirstin Rasmussen and Jess Bryson and leaving plenty of time to bar-hop afterwards. Or, stay for HOOKUP, which constructs a romantic comedy using the turn-ons and -offs of two audience members, and which includes a midnight toast. Say "Yes, and" to 2018! (Bad Dog Theatre, 875 Bloor St. W., baddogtheatre.com)

—Carly Maga

Dwayne Gretzky New Year's 2018: The Infinity Ball

Watch this if: 2017 has felt like an eternity.

Toronto's favourite cover supergroup Dwayne Gretzky's biggest show is always its New Year's Eve blowout and this year they're stepping up their game. In a bigger venue, Dwayne Gretzky is joining forces with other installation artists like Thank You Kindly, Sandro Petrillo and the Broadbent Sisters, and local food and drink vendors to create The Infinity Ball. After the year we've had, why not spend the last night of 2017 pretending this party lasts forever? (Heritage Court at the EnerCare Centre, 19 Nunavut Rd., ticketfly.com)

—C.M.

The year in critical viewing

Amidst the sound and fury of an industry in upheaval, inspiring cinema could be found everywhere – if you knew where to look



Saoirse Ronan and Lucas Hedges in Lady Bird.

COURTESY OF ELEVATION

KATE TAYLOR

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 28, 2017UPDATED DECEMBER 28, 2017

Convulsed by the Harvey Weinstein scandal, the fall of Kevin Spacey and the rise of #MeToo, the film industry often seemed too distracted by off-screen issues to offer up a clear critical narrative in 2017. Did the year belong to the box-office success of *Wonder Woman* – or to the fan backlash against *The Last Jedi*? In the midst of the sound and fury, inspiring cinema could still be found everywhere, in places as obvious as a massive war epic and as unlikely as an unassuming little doc. Here are my Top 10 films for 2017 – and the order is merely alphabetical.

A Better Man



A Better Man is more a social achievement than an artistic one.

Having failed to notice this Canadian documentary at the Hot Docs festival back in May, I watched it because a friend posted a link on Facebook: *A Better Man* is more a social achievement than an artistic one. More than 20 years after they broke up, filmmaker Attiya Khan convinces former partner Steve that he should go on camera to discuss – with a psychologist present – the way he used her as a daily punching bag during their youthful live-in relationship.

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He won't reveal his background or last name; we don't know his current status, but the courage it takes both parties to try healing makes for a remarkable film. Lawrence Jackman co-directs.

Blade Runner 2049



Ryan Gosling in Blade Runner 2049.

STEPHEN VAUGHAN

Quebec director Denis Villeneuve pulled off a notable coup when he successfully directed the sequel to Ridley Scott's 1982 cult classic *Blade Runner*. The story, set in a dystopian Los Angeles where Ryan Gosling's agent "K" must assassinate wayward replicants, convincingly extends the original and brings its themes forward to the present moment – that is, 2017. And the many tips of the hat to the previous film are clever and graceful. Neither clone nor rogue, this is the rare replicant that truly merits its existence.

The Breadwinner



The Breadwinner is a fairy tale of sorts drawn in a folksier style.

COURTESY OF ELEVATION

With this international co-production, director Nora Twomey translates the book of the same name by Canadian author Deborah Ellis into one of the year's most effective pieces of animation. *The Breadwinner*, about a young girl named Parvanain Taliban-controlled Kabul who must disguise herself as a boy to provide for her family, touchingly exposes the practical

The Globe and Mail – December 28, 2017 (3 of 6)

realities of life under that misogynist regime. The sharp animation also neatly integrates a story-within-the-story, a fairy tale of sorts drawn in a folksier style.

Certain Women



Kristen Stewart in *Certain Women*.

This 2016 film didn't appear in Toronto until early 2017, and then flew under the radar when awards season hit. Director Kelly Reichardt loosely ties together three short stories by the American author Maile Meloy into a subtle look at a new kind of lonesome cowboy as she follows four independent women in rural Montana. There is not a line of exposition in her admirable script; she leaves the audience to figure out where these women are going – with help from a stellar cast of Laura Dern, Michelle Williams, Kristen Stewart and Lily Gladstone.

Dunkirk



Christopher Nolan uses an intriguing three-part structure in *Dunkirk*.

COURTESY OF WARNER BROS.

Not many of us know what war feels like, but surely what Christopher Nolan produced in his 70 mm, shot-for-Imax *Dunkirk* gets close to the experience. As the British desperately attempt to evacuate their troops from the beach at Dunkirk, fear, confusion, self-preservation and the odd spark of heroism play out. Adding to the fog of war is Nolan's intriguing three-part structure, alternating between one week on land, one day at sea and one hour in the air.

Faces Places



In *Faces Places*, a pair of filmmakers travel around to small towns in France taking photographs of the people they find there.

This was my *coup de coeur* of the year, a deceptively whimsical doc from veteran French filmmaker Agnès Varda and the large-scale street photographer JR. Together they travel rural France in his van/photo booth taking giant pictures of the locals and displaying them in public places. The film gradually emerges as a delicate consideration of aging and change on the one hand, and celebrity in the era of the selfie on the other.

The Florida Project



Bria Vinaite, left, and Brooklynn Prince in *The Florida Project*.

COURTESY OF ELEVATION

To tell the story of a summer in a welfare motel a stone's throw from Disney World, director Sean Baker took his inspiration from the *Little Rascals*. The antics of a trio of kids lead by Brooklynn Prince's sassy Moonee make this the rare film about poverty that does not condescend to its subjects nor numb its audience. There's also an Oscar-worthy supporting performance from Willem Dafoe as the motel caretaker.

Get Out



Daniel Kaluuya in Get Out.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Jordan Peele borrows from Hitchcock to create a small psychological horror movie that he then uses to further his own satirical ends. In a standout performance, Daniel Kaluuya plays the friendly black guy brought home to meet his pleasant white girlfriend's wealthy but oh-so-liberal parents. But all is not what it seems in this welcoming household staffed by oddly vacant black servants. Peele succeeds in making his sharp expose of white liberalism simultaneously scary and funny – and important, too.

Lady Bird



Saoirse Ronan in Lady Bird.

COURTESY OF ELEVATION

The offering may sound painfully familiar – this is a small movie about the tense relationship between an artsy girl in her last year of high school and her judgmental mother – but the touch of writer-director Greta Gerwig, always delicate, sometimes surprising, lifts *Lady Bird* well above the standard coming-of-age drama. Saoirse Ronan is note perfect as the earnestly questing Christine (who would rather be called Lady Bird) and, as the mother, Laurie Metcalf does exquisite work revealing all the love and humanity in a character who never has anything nice to say.

The Square



Terry Notary in *The Square*.

COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES

On the festival circuit, European critics raved about Ruben Ostlund's wacky Swedish art-world satire; North Americans were much less convinced by the odd flashes of surrealism in a darkly comic and rambling drama about a modern art curator caught in a marketing scandal. Still, *The Square* has stayed with me all fall. Visual artists are usually portrayed as mad or heroic geniuses on film; a movie that dramatizes the tense contradiction at the heart of the contemporary museum world, where elite institutions are built on transgressive art, is an arresting thing.

Bonus: Shiners



In an image from *Shiners*, Vincent Zacharko gives an old school shine at the Nite Owl Barber Shop in Etobicoke, Ont.

All you could ask of the doc experience: informative, entertaining, poignant – and globe-trotting, too. Canadian filmmaker Stacey Tenenbaum takes viewers from the streets of La Paz, where Bolivian shoe shiners are so ashamed of their trade they wear ski masks to hide their identities, to a high-end boutique in Tokyo where patrons quaff champagne while they wait for the perfect polish.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/the-year-in-critical-viewing-kate-taylors-top-10-films-of2017/article37445528/>

This week in Toronto: Next Stage Theatre Festival and music for a Long Winter

Our curated guide to this week's offerings also includes the Killers at ACC, New Year's Resolutions at Hot Docs.

Sun., Dec. 31, 2017

TUESDAY

The Wedding Party

Watch this if: You've had enough of your own family drama.

Last January, Crow's Theatre opened the doors of its new complex with its first official production, *The Wedding Party*, written by Kristen Thomson and directed by Crow's artistic director Chris Abraham: a fast-paced comedy that put Canadian acting elite through the ringer with costume changes, multiple characters and intricate stage action. *The Wedding Party* returns to remind you, so soon after the holidays, that your family drama could be a whole lot worse. (8 p.m., Streetcar Crowsnest, 345 Carlaw Ave., until Jan. 20, crowstheatre.com)

—Carly Maga

Hard Rock Medical

Watch this if: You want to fill your hospital show prescription.

This medical drama set in northern Ontario is on its final rounds with the beginning of its fourth season. The students we met in Season 1 are within reach of becoming full-fledged doctors, assuming they can navigate the professional and personal obstacles that life throws in their way. Look for Eric Peterson (*Corner Gas*) to guest-star this season as a cranky MD with an addiction. (9 p.m., TVO)

You might be interested in

—Debra Yeo

WEDNESDAY

Next Stage Theatre Festival

Watch this if: You're already gearing up for summer festival season.

The Toronto Fringe Festival's winter sister is back, bringing with it the essentials of the summer theatre blockbuster, including the (heated) beer tent, a packed schedule of curated shows and

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some Fringe favourites (like *Sex T-Rex* and Martin Dockery). Likely to sell out early is *Rumspingra Break!*, a new musical by Matt Murray, Akiva Romer-Segal and Colleen Dauncey about twin sisters lost in Buffalo, N.Y., during their week of freedom from the Amish faith. (Until Jan. 14, Factory Theatre, 125 Bathurst St., fringetoronto.com)

—C.M.

FRIDAY

Long Winter

Watch this if: You want to warm up with art and music.

Toronto's suddenly frigid winter has a bright side: the return of beloved art and music series Long Winter. The first edition of 2018 arrives at the Gladstone Hotel Friday, with musicians like Babygirl, Matthew Progress and Tremayne, and art by Roxanne Ignatius, Maya Ben David, Daniel Jelani Ellis and more. As always, radio personality Vish Khanna returns with his talk show *Long Night*. (7 p.m., Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen St. W., torontolongwinter.com)

-C.M.

The Killers

Watch this if: You're in the mood to party like it's 2004.

There are new faces in the touring lineup and a recent record in *Wonderful Wonderful*, the Killers' first in five years, but nobody's kidding anybody: it's 2004 introduction "Mr. Brightside" that the arena crowd will be demanding. This return starts a tour of North America and beyond, so there might be a few kinks to work out — and you need a scorecard to keep track of the changing travelling personnel amid the confetti and cascading sparklers. But that's still Brandon Flowers centre stage in a suit of gold, heart on his sleeve and gamely trying to blow the place up as he bears down on 40. (8 p.m., [Air Canada Centre](http://AirCanadaCentre.com), 40 Bay St.)

—Chris Young

Requiem for the American Dream

Watch this if: You want to start 2018 with movies that inspire.

The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema launches 2018 with movies that may inspire a better you (or at least that's the hope at this time of year). Fittingly titled "New Year's Resolutions," the program begins with *Requiem for the American Dream*, the latest takedown of the powers that be by the great Noam Chomsky. Once you're done learning about the concentration of the world's wealth and power in the hands of the few (and what you can do about it), you can get fired up by three more films, including *The Barkley Marathons*, a look at one of the world's most

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gruelling athletic competitions. (9 p.m., Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W., festival runs until Jan. 10, hotdocscinema.ca)

—*Jason Anderson*

SATURDAY

The Bentway Skate Trail

See this if: You're interested in a new kind of urban space.

It's the first phase of what will eventually be a 1.75-kilometre trail under the Gardiner Expressway with 55 outdoor "rooms" that include parks, farmers markets, performance and exhibit spaces. Saturday's opening kicks off a winter season of skate parties with food and music. And opening weekend includes live music and DJ performances; art installations; a chance to meet Canadian pairs skating silver medallists Lubov Ilyushechkina and Dylan Moscovitch; free admission and tours of Fort York National Historic Site; and the Mayor's Skate Party Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. (Opens at 11 a.m., beside the Fort York Visitor Centre, 250 Fort York Blvd., thebentway.ca)

—*Bruce DeMara*

SUNDAY

Rachel Barton Pine

Watch this if: You're moved by a well-played violin and an inspirational story.

From humble beginnings, Barton Pine was an award-winning prodigy who made her solo orchestral debut at age 10. It nearly came to an end in 1995, when she lost one leg and suffered damage to the other in a train accident in her native Chicago. That she's here now, after more than 40 surgeries and rehab, is testament to her talent and heart. She has established a foundation to help disadvantaged musicians and picked up the pieces of her career as a performer and educator, with a repertoire running from Mozart to metal and jazz. This afternoon show is free, but tickets can be reserved beginning Jan. 2 at 10 a.m. (2 p.m., Mazzoleni Concert Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., rcmusic.com)

—C.Y.

David Bowie double feature

Watch this if: You want to celebrate a much-missed rock icon.

The world has been a far less fabulous place since David Bowie's death of liver cancer nearly two years ago. Fans can mark what would have been the rock legend's 71st birthday (it's actually next Monday but close enough) by enjoying two rare screenings of Bowie-centric flicks.

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After a matinee of *The Hunger* — the moody 1980 thriller that starred the Thin White Duke as an unusually elegant vampire — it's time for *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars*, D.A. Pennebaker's exhilarating documentary of Bowie's final stand as his extraterrestrial glam-rock alter ego onstage in London in 1973. (4:30 and 8 p.m., Royal Cinema, 608 College St., newsite.theroyal.to)

—J.A.

The Chi

Watch this if: You're a fan of prestige drama.

This series from Emmy-winning writer Lena Waithe (*Master of None*) is described as a coming-of-age drama. But not everyone gets to age on Chicago's South Side, where it's set. Jason Mitchell (*Straight Outta Compton*, *Mudbound*) stars as aspiring restaurateur Brandon. The talented ensemble cast also includes Alex Hibbert (*Moonlight*), Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine (*Treme*, *The Knick*) and Sonja Sohn (*The Wire*). The show allows its characters their humanity but doesn't shy away from their failings, whether it's a boy who thieves from the dead or a grieving stepfather out for misguided revenge. (10 p.m., CraveTV)

—D.Y.

Netflix takes off with astronaut doc

December 2017



Adam Benzine30-11-2017©C21Media

WCSFP: Streaming giant Netflix has commissioned a feature documentary about a group of aspiring female astronauts, to be helmed by the director of iconic space documentary *In the Shadow of the Moon*.

Mercury 13 focuses on 13 American women who underwent much of the same physiological screening testing as the seven male astronauts selected by NASA in 1959 for its Project Mercury human spaceflight program.

“The women did not actually land on the Moon, but this film explores what could have been and why they did not make it to space,” Netflix’s director of original documentary programming, Jason Spingarn-Koff, told delegates at the World Congress of Science & Factual Producers. “It’s a very inspiring film.”

Mercury 13 will launch on the SVoD service in 2018. It is being produced by Fine Point Pictures in association with Dox Productions, and is being helmed by Sundance Film Festival award winner David Sington (*In the Shadow of the Moon*) and Heather Walsh (*Moon Machines*, *Mission Control: The Unsung Heroes of Apollo*).

Netflix also detailed two further factual commissions at the World Congress in San Francisco. The firm has ordered a second season of its original series *Bill Nye Saves the World*, which Spingarn-Koff called “a very fresh approach to science programming.”

The exec also discussed the net’s previously reported tentpole series *Our Planet*, from Silverback Films and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Set to premiere in 2019, the eight-part series comes from Alastair Fothergill and Keith Scholey, who jointly created *Planet Earth*, *Frozen Planet* and *Blue Planet* for the BBC.

NY Times boss urges PSB vigilance

December 2017

Mark Thompson

WCSFP: Political opposition to public service broadcasters (PSBs) will intensify, despite increasing public support for them, New York Times CEO Mark Thompson has warned producers in San Francisco.

In a wide-ranging keynote at the World Congress of Science & Factual Producers, the former head of UK pubcasters the BBC and Channel 4 said that continuing media disruption will mean “justification for public service broadcasting is actually going to grow in many categories.”

“However, the politics are proving difficult in many territories,” he added, predicting that misplaced fears among commercial rivals will bring political pressure to bear on PSBs.

“The psychology of trying to beat up on the PSBs and trying to stop them competing is so great,” Thompson said. “I think the case for public broadcasting is very strong, but I’m quite pessimistic if it’s going to be heard in many countries.”

He added that PSBs need to be ready to engage with the public on new and emerging platforms, “so that if that wind changes, in terms of the digital journey, they must be thinking hard about how to use devices. It’s a challenge for every single PSB I know, and of course that includes the BBC and Channel 4.”

He added that, outside of the US, the fundamental argument for PSBs had been widely accepted. “Without the presence of the public broadcaster, some socially important cultural content wouldn’t be made,” he said.

Thompson went on to predict that “many types of content are going to experience an acute failure” in the coming months and years, adding that local news reporting in the US would be an obvious example. “What’s the willingness to pay?” he asked.

Elsewhere, in conversation with Love Productions’ creative director Sara Ramsden, Thompson predicted it would be “more than a decade into the future” before the New York Times was forced to retire its print edition.

“I don’t want to subsidise the newspaper for our digital output,” he said. “It’s a platform. We have a number of platforms – we have a website, we have apps, we do live events, we’re making a TV show. These are platforms, they’re not the heart and soul of the company.”

Eventually, “the economies of scale of print distribution will run into the reverse,” he added. “The real trick will be to check you have a robust digital business at the point that that happens.”

<http://www.c21media.net/ny-times-boss-urges-psb-vigilance/?ss=WCSFP>

Netflix outlines science needs

December 2017

Jason Spingarn-Koff

WCSFP: Netflix's director of original documentary programming gave a broad outline of the types of science projects the SVoD service is looking for here in San Francisco yesterday.

The streaming giant scored a hit this year with its climate change-focused original Chasing Coral, from director Jeff Orlowski. At present, however, most of its science and nature programming is licensed with split rights on a non-exclusive basis.

Going forward, Netflix's Jason Spingarn-Koff said he was interested in natural history series and filmmaker-driven projects, and wants pitchers to focus on "identifying and cultivating tent-pole events."

Pitches are welcome at any stage of production, but the exec said "development isn't our model – we want people to come to us with fully formed projects." Ideally, these should be packaged as much as possible.

The streamer doesn't have an open submissions process, so pitches should come through an agent, distributor or known contact. And on the rights front, Netflix expects full ownership: global exclusivity coupled with all rights in perpetuity.

As for runtimes, "let the story determine the form," Spingarn-Koff said. "If you bring us a great story, we can help you determine the form. It could be 20 minutes, it could be 10 hours... we don't have any arbitrary runtimes."

As previously reported, he cited space doc Mercury 13, upcoming wildlife series Our Planet and host-driven Bill Nye Saves the World as examples of original science-based single docs and shows.

"We do pride ourselves on being very creator-friendly," Spingarn-Koff told delegates at the 2017 World Congress of Science & Factual Producers. "We're very interested in science, nature, technology, medicine and health broadly; there's not just one thing we're looking for. We're not looking to tick a box."

"We're looking for filmmakers and unique voices, unique visions. Because we're global, we're also interested in regional stories. I would essentially encourage you to come to us with any interesting story."

He ended his delegate presentation with a challenge to producers. "Think about episodic series," he said. "We've had a lot of success with true crime series The Keepers and Making a Murderer, but I have not yet seen one in the science space."

<http://www.c21media.net/netflix-outlines-science-needs/?ss=WCSFP>

Wildlife execs reject 'Disneyfication' claim

December 2017



The BBC's big-budget series Blue Planet 2

WCSFP: An international panel of wildlife filmmakers has rejected the accusation that they are making "Disneyfied" natural history programming that shies away from the reality of climate change.

At the Unnatural History session during last week's World Congress of Science & Factual Producers in San Francisco, the BBC's head of commissioning for natural history and specialist factual, Tom McDonald, led a spirited defence of the UK pubcaster's choices.

"I disagree with the opening proposition that we're 'Disneyfying' filmmaking," McDonald told delegates. "I would say, though, that there's been a huge evolution in how we convey environmental messaging in our series."

He explained that, in the recent past, landmark BBC wildlife series such as Africa typically featured climate change commentary solely at the end of the programme.

"The big difference between four to five years ago and Blue Planet 2 is we are embedding those big reality-check messages right in the middle of the films now."

"People would have said that we are 'brave' to do that in the past, and yet Blue Planet 2 is the most watched programme on British TV across any genre."

McDonald's comments were echoed by Karina Holden, head of factual for Australia's Northern Pictures. "We're no longer sleepwalking; it does feel like there's an awakening," she said. "I think the narrative today is one of change."

Holden said it was important to honestly convey the devastation that is being done to the natural world by humans "in a way that the viewer doesn't walk out of there thinking, 'It's all too much.'"

"How do we move people from thinking passively to actively?" she asked. "The interesting challenge for filmmakers is how do you deal with this story of loss and decline when there's nothing visually to see?"

Such thinking was highlighted as a key challenge for filmmaker Jeff Orlowski, director of Netflix feature doc Chasing Coral, which tracks the decline of coral reefs across the globe. Orlowski

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told attendees the story offered an opportunity to depict “an entire ecosystem that visually represents climate change in a nutshell.”

“We’re at the stage where we’re losing so much life so rapidly, we had to ask: how do you capture that visually?” he said.

Orlowski added Netflix was an attractive partner to work with because it allowed an opportunity to reach a wider audience than just the non-skeptics who tend to typically seek out environmental films.

“To some degree, films often find their own choir when they’re doing distribution,” he said. “Who would go and pay US\$15 to see An Inconvenient Sequel in a movie theatre? If you do, you’re probably already part of the target audience; you agree with Al Gore.”

The session ended on a downbeat note as one attendee asked panelist Paul Ehrlich, the president of the Center for Conservation Biology at Stanford University, if there was realistically anything that could be done at this point to stop the planet plunging into a manmade death spiral.

“The simple answer is no,” Ehrlich said. “I don’t think there’s any scientist at all who believes we have any chance of avoiding a total collapse in the next few decades. So why do we keep trying? Well, partly it’s habit.”

He added that his advice was simply: “Drink a lot of good red wine. It will keep your environment internally in great shape while your environment externally goes down the drain.”

This week in Toronto: A female Lear

January 7, 2017

Our curated guide to the week's best offerings also includes *The Family*, *My Funny Valentine* and *The Detective*.

TUESDAY

Lear

Watch this if: You think you've seen *King Lear* enough times.

As our sunny story of 2017, Karen Fricker and I wrote about the mainstreaming of cross-gender casting in Shakespeare, giving women actors more access to some of the most famous roles in theatre history. Groundling Theatre's production of *Lear* (note the absence of the gender-identifying "King" or "Queen") is a great example of that, featuring Seana McKenna in the title role. But she's only one performer in this all-star cast, including Colin Mochrie, Kevin Hanchard, Deborah Hay, Diana Donnelly and Jim Mezon. (Until Jan. 28, [Harbourfront Centre Theatre](#), 231 Queens Quay W.)

-Carly Maga

WEDNESDAY

The Detectives

Watch this if: You like your true crime mixed with TV drama.

With viewers' appetites for true crime shows whetted by the likes of *The Jinx* and *Making a Murderer*, CBC gives us a documentary-drama hybrid, in which real-life detectives' recollections of singular cases are enhanced by detailed dramatizations. In the premiere, for instance, Australian-Canadian actor John Pyper-Ferguson (*Suits*, *The Last Ship*) plays Mike Eastham, the RCMP sergeant who investigated the 1982 Wells Gray Murders, in which a family of six was slain in a B.C. provincial park. Eastham himself provides narration and perspective on a case that still haunts him more than 35 years later. (9 p.m., [CBC](#))

—Debra Yeo

The Family at Doc Soup

Watch this if: You want to learn about Australia's weirdest cult.

From the mid-1960s until the late '80s, a yoga teacher named Anne Hamilton-Byrne held almost total control over a group of adults and children — 14 of whom she adopted or otherwise

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claimed as her own — in a series of enclaves near Melbourne. Known as The Family, the cult believed that Hamilton-Byrne was a living god who was preparing them for the coming apocalypse. To help foster that notion among her youngest followers (whose hair was dyed blond like their leader's), she'd routinely beat them and dose them with LSD. All this makes for a disturbing true-life tale in 2018's first selection in Hot Docs' monthly Doc Soup series. Filled with firsthand accounts by survivors, director Rosie Jones' film plays three screenings over Wednesday and Thursday. (Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W., hotdocscinema.ca)

—Jason Anderson

My Funny Valentine

Watch this if: You want to remember someone special around Valentine's Day.

Ten years ago next month, Grade 8 transgender student Latisha (born Larry) King was shot and killed by her classmate the day after she asked him to be her valentine. After the murder, there was a lot of attention paid to the California community in which it took place, examining the homophobia that permeated the school and town. Playwright Dave Deveau with Vancouver's Zee Zee Theatre created *My Funny Valentine* to tell those stories, and earned a Jessie Award nomination and critical acclaim on the West Coast. This is the play's Toronto premiere, seemingly *The Laramie Project* for this generation. (Until Jan. 21, [Buddies in Bad Times Theatre](#), 12 Alexander St.)

-C.M.

Amadeus (UPDATE – Jan. 8, 2017: This has been cancelled. See note below)

Watch this if: You like elephants in the room.

Last week, Soulpepper Theatre's *Amadeus* was just a notable upcoming production, featuring company co-founder and acting staple Diego Matamoros against one of the company's favourite up-and-comers, Paolo Santalucia, as Antonio Salieri and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. This week, it's one of the more interesting productions in Toronto theatre history as its director, Albert Schultz, recently resigned his role as Soulpepper artistic director amid allegations of sexual harassment and assault. (Until Feb. 10, [Young Centre for the Performing Arts](#), 50 Tank House Lane)

-C.M.

THURSDAY

Shorts That Are Not Pants

Watch this if: You like to see great shorts for free.

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A quarterly series that celebrates the best in short-form cinema, *Shorts That Are Not Pants* launches its seventh season with something special: a free program of audience faves from the series' history thus far. The slate of "greatest hits" includes *Interesting Ball*, a typically bonkers offering by the team behind *Swiss Army Man*, and *Belly* by the delightful British animator Julia Pott. It's also got some of the best shorts to come out of Toronto in recent years, like Steven McCarthy's vampire tale *O Negative* and *Day 40*, Sol Friedman's unorthodox spin on the story of Noah's Ark. More goodies await viewers who like it short and sweet. (7 p.m., Carlton Cinemas, 20 Carlton St., shortsnotpants.com)

—J.A.

Chris Hadfield's Generator

Watch this if: You like your science with a chaser of whimsy.

The Commander returns for the third edition of *Generator*, a variety show that combines cutting-edge technology and ideas, music from house band Tupperware Remix Party, comedian and BBC presenter Robin Ince serving as emcee. That's about as specific as the pre-show word gets, but given the example of the first two at Massey Hall (and one sojourn to the Arctic) the guest list will draw from academia, astrophysics, letters and jokesters, and chances are you'll walk out having learned a few things you didn't know going in. And in this age of dumb and numb, how often does that happen? (8 p.m., [Roy Thomson Hall](#), 60 Simcoe St.)

—Chris Young

FRIDAY

Nine in Concert

Watch this if: Show tunes turn your crank.

Stratford Festival veteran Juan Chioran stars as Guido Contini in this weekend's concert presentation of the 1982 Broadway play, based on Fellini's movie *8 1/2*, which won five Tony Awards including Best Musical and Original Score (the hall of mirrors history included a 2009 film best forgotten). Despite the dated premise, the music at least is guaranteed for this treatment: a cast of Contini muses drawn from theatre and opera, an ensemble of young Etobicoke School of Arts tyros and a 23-piece orchestra, all brought together by the same Podium Concert Productions folks following up their inaugural 2017 production of *The Secret Garden in Concert*. (7:30 p.m., also Saturday 2 and 7:30 p.m., Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, [427 Bloor St. W.](#))

—C.Y.

SUNDAY

The Caregivers' Club

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Watch this if: You want an honest look at a common problem.

Here's a sobering statistic: there are currently 564,000 Canadians living with dementia, each with one or more family members who provide care. This documentary by Cynthia Banks (*Reefer Riches*, *Apocalypse 2012*) profiles three Ontario families caring for members with dementia, a task described in the film as trying to push a rock up a mountain while its full weight bears down upon you. There are daily challenges and frustrations, to be sure, but also profound devotion from the spouses and children profiled as they try to do their best for their loved ones while not losing sight of themselves. (9 p.m., [CBC](#))

—D.Y.

Update – January 8, 2017: Soulpepper Theatre Company announced it will cancel this week's 2018 debut production *Amadeus* at the request of its artists. *Amadeus* was directed by Soulpepper co-founder Albert Schultz. Schultz resigned from the company last week following sexual harassment allegations. See the Star's latest article [here](#).

Correction – January 8, 2017: The item on CBC's *The Detectives* previously described the subject matter of the second episode, not the premiere.

She Does the City – January 8, 2018 (1 of 2)

HOT DOCS + BELL LET'S TALK TEAM UP FOR FREE MENTAL HEALTH FILM SERIES

POSTED ON JANUARY 8, 2018

This month, [Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema](#) is partnering with [Bell Let's Talk](#) and [Workman Arts](#) for a special (FREE) Mental Health Film Series, which aims to heighten awareness and generate discussion about mental illness and how it's treated in our society. The Mental Health Film Series will feature three documentaries, each exploring a topic concerning mental health and the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

The series begins Wednesday, January 17 with *The S Word* and will conclude on January 31, Bell Let's Talk Day, with *Darkness and Hope: Depression, Sports, and Me*. Here's a little info on the films:

THE S WORD

Wednesday, January 17 – 6:30 PM

D: Lisa Klein | 93 min | 2017 | USA

Suicide touches many of our lives and yet our society has so much trouble understanding it, or even just talking about it. *The S Word* seeks to move the conversation forward by engaging with those coping with loss and grappling head on with suicide in all its complexity. Directed by Lisa Klein, who lost both her brother and father to suicide, and driven by survivor Dese'Rae Stage's mission to create a movement of greater understanding, *The S Word* is a deeply compassionate and courageous work of documentary filmmaking.

MANIC

Wednesday, January 24 – 6:30 PM

D: Kalina Bertin | 84 min | 2017 | USA Canada

Filmmaker Kalina Bertin bravely turns the camera on her own household to find answers for her siblings Felicia and François Sean's mental health issues. Their father George was a prophet, scam artist, cult leader and father of fifteen children from different parts of the world. Is this mysterious man's strange legacy connected to Felicia's struggle with bipolar disorder? An assembly of home movies, interviews and observations, the Hot Docs 2017 Festival

She Does the City – January 8, 2018 (1 of 2)

favourite *Manic* is an urgent and compelling plunge into a family's troubling personal history and the intangible ties that bind us.

DARKNESS AND HOPE: DEPRESSION, SPORTS, AND ME

Wednesday, January 31 – 6:30 PM

D: Hubert Davis | 44 min | 2012 | Canada

Celebrated athletes, including Olympian Clara Hughes, Stanley Cup champion Stéphane Richer and World Series winner Darryl Strawberry, open up to Michael Landsberg, host of TSN 1050's *LANDSBERG IN THE MORNING*, about their personal battles with depression. While facing his own mental health challenges, Landsberg brings insight and intelligence to an issue that often lives in the shadows of the professional sports world, shining a light on the stories of perseverance, vulnerability and humanity of our athletic heroes.

Each screening will be followed by a discussion moderated by Geoff Pevere, Program Director of Workman Arts' *Rendezvous With Madness*, with filmmakers, subjects and experts.

Free tickets (a maximum of two per person, per screening) can be obtained at the Hot Docs Box Office (506 Bloor St. W.) or online at www.hotdocscinema.ca.

DOCUMENTARY TURNS INTO A SEARCH FOR UNKNOWN BROTHER

By **Jordan Adler**
January 9, 2018



A scene from the film *Aida's Secrets*

While promoting their newest projects, many filmmakers would make an effort not to spoil any major plot turns. However, Israeli director Alon Schwarz is taking a different approach with his documentary *Aida's Secrets*, opening on Jan. 12 at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in Toronto.

In his award-winning film, Schwarz focuses on Izak and Shep, two brothers born after the Holocaust who were separated shortly after their births and reunited nearly 70 years into their lives. Izak grew up in Israel without any knowledge of a brother in Canada. Shep, who lived in Winnipeg since the age of two, was unaware of Izak, as well as the fact that his mother, Aida, lived in Canada as well.

In the documentary, Shep gets the opportunity to meet Aida, although he is filled with questions about why she never reconnected with him. He believes she still possesses secrets. One of those mysteries, solved in the film's closing minutes, is that Izak and Shep have another brother who lives in Toronto, though he was born in Montreal on April 3, 1949, under the name George Zasadzinska, and was later adopted.

"We need to get the word out," Schwarz tells The CJN, adding that both brothers are keen to meet their long-lost relative.

The Canadian Jewish News – January 9, 2018 (2 of 3)

An exclusive video with testimonials from Izak and Shep is currently circulating online. Schwarz is hoping that the clip, alongside the film's Canadian release, will help local audiences track their brother down.

Schwarz has a personal connection to this discovery, as well. He is Izak's nephew, and says he remembers hearing as a child that his uncle had a blind brother who lived in Canada. This information came directly from Aida, who visited Israel to see her son on several occasions.

According to a letter from Aida, she sent Izak to Israel so he could receive a Jewish education. However, when her application to that country was denied, she immigrated to Canada. However, Aida was determined that Shep's existence would never reach Izak's ears. She told her son's family not to utter a word.

"People were hiding this secret and not knowing why they were hiding it," Schwarz says. "I think some secrets are buried so heavily that people don't want to open up later on."

When Izak and his granddaughter returned from a trip to Poland, explaining he may have found proof of another brother, Schwarz confessed that he knew this for decades.

"He throws me out of the house," Schwarz says, referring to Izak's reaction. "It's also what started the film."

A couple of days later, the director arrived at Izak's home and began to shoot Aida's Secrets.

Although Schwarz had never helmed a film before, he gained some production experience working with his brother Shaul, also a filmmaker, on the 2013 documentary Narco Cultura. He also received assistance from researchers on the online genealogy platform MyHeritage.

The rookie director quit his job as a product manager in Israel's high-tech sector to pursue this project, and Shaul later came on board as a co-director.

Aida's Secrets has since become a hit in Israel, winning the audience award at Tel Aviv's documentary film festival in 2016.

The Canadian Jewish News – January 9, 2018 (3 of 3)

Beyond the humane true story at its centre, the film made headlines for exploring a mostly forgotten chapter of postwar history.

In the latter half of the film, Schwarz and various researchers excavate photographs and footage of Jews thriving in the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp in Germany after the Holocaust ended.

“Most of (the survivors) were mentally and physically hurt, but a lot of them also rebounded into life,” Schwarz says.

It is these sections where we learn about Aida’s life after the war, her romance with a man named Grisha, and the events that led to Izak and Shep’s separation.

Now, the Schwarz brothers are working together on another film, although they are still hopeful they will receive information about Aida’s third son.

Canadians who may know about this brother are encouraged to email information to aidasthirdchild@gmail.com.

“You have to be very lucky to be set up with a secret like this,” Schwarz says. “I had no idea that we would find (Shep), and ... I had no idea that there was a third brother that we’re still looking to reunite.”

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Happy End a dark, daring look at decadence

Michael Haneke's latest film uses social media to dissect the ennui of an affluent French family and, once again, implicate the viewer in their misdeeds.

As Anne, prim and proper, tries to keep everything together, she finds she has a worthy foe in the form of her young niece. As things start to spin into chaos, familial dysfunction rises to the surface.

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic

Thu., Jan. 11, 2018

Happy End

Starring Isabelle Huppert, Jean-Louis Trintignant, Mathieu Kassovitz, Fantine Harduin, Laura Verlinden and Franz Rogowski. Written and directed by Michael Haneke. Opens Friday at TIFF Bell Lightbox. 108 minutes. **14A**

Michael Haneke makes Snapchat sinister.

In his new film *Happy End*, arriving in Toronto theatres after festival stops that included Cannes and TIFF, the audience once again becomes complicit in extreme behaviour. The Austrian writer/director uses social media to dissect the ennui of an affluent French family.

Haneke shrewdly casts young Belgian actress Fantine Harduin as an unhappy teen who commits shocking acts of cruelty, all while communicating with unseen friends via Snapchat. Who could guess



the dark thoughts behind that sweet face?

From left: Fantine Harduin as Ève Laurent, Jean-Louis Trintignant as Georges Laurent, Isabelle Huppert as Anne Laurent, Laura Verlinden as Anais Laurent, Toby Jones as Lawrence Bradshaw and Mathieu Kassovitz as Thomas Laurent in Michael Haneke's film *Happy End*. (SYSTEM / COURTESY SONY PICTURES CLASSICS)

The director revisits themes of social inequality, quality of life (and the ending of it), sexual obsessions and modern miscommunication that he's examined in other (and perhaps better) films, including *Amour*, *Caché* and *Funny Games*.

Toronto Star – January 11, 2018 (2 of 2)

His surgical scalpel remains as sharp as ever, even as he carves into familiar flesh. He assembles a great cast — *Amour's* Jean-Louis Trintignant and Isabelle Huppert, plus Mathieu Kassovitz, Franz Rogowski, Toby Jones, Laura Verlinden and welcome discovery Harduin — for a story set in the port city of Calais.

Shot with elegant forbearance by regular Haneke cinematographer Christian Berger and leanly scripted by the filmmaker, *Happy End* indirectly addresses the ongoing European refugee crisis, but mainly savages the indiscreet charmlessness of the bourgeoisie.

The family of retired construction tycoon Georges Laurent (Trintignant) finds itself beset with indignities of all sorts: a drug overdose, a savage beating, kinky sexual infidelity, a wanderer with dementia and a job-site wall collapse that may lead to a ruinous legal settlement.

The Laurents reside in a fabulous waterfront mansion attended by many servants, but their lives seemed destined for dysfunction. Georges' daughter Anne (Isabelle Huppert) now runs his construction firm and she's obliged to deal with its many problems.

These include that wall collapse, caught on security video, which injured an employee and now threatens the firm's future. Anne has little faith in her childish son Pierre (Rogowski), whom she unwisely employs in a top job. (We see him do a bizarre karaoke routine where he sings Sia's "Big Girls Cry," a song which includes the lyrics "no time for love, no time for hate.")

Anne's surgeon brother Thomas (Kassovitz) is too caught up in his own drama to be much help — he and his wife Anaïs (Verlinden) have a new baby son, as well as sullen 13-year-old Ève (Harduin), Thomas' daughter from an earlier marriage. This does not stop Thomas from also having a mistress.

Ève looks innocent, but her intentions are anything but. No horror movie can top the chills you feel when she's left alone with her baby brother. She and her granddad, soon to be 85, discover they have a shared interest not in bedtime stories or zoo visits but rather in misanthropy.

The film keeps us riveted to the screen, parsing every carefully lensed deed and misdeed, wondering how far the characters and Haneke will go.

Most chilling of all is the thought the filmmaker implants that we're all too morally corrupt to care, one way or the other. We prefer to gaze, not to act.

If you think the title is anything but a grim joke, you don't know Haneke.

Also opening Friday: *Aida's Secrets*, a post-Holocaust family reconnection documentary, by Alon Schwarz and Shaul Schwarz; and *Mountain*, an ode to glorious precipices, directed by Jennifer Peedom and narrated by Willem Dafoe. Both films screen at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/review/2018/01/11/happy-end-a-dark-daring-look-at-decadence.html>

Hot Docs to honor Barbara Kopple, John Walker

By Daniele Alcinii

January 17, 2018



Canadian festival Hot Docs has chosen American director **Barbara Kopple** as the recipient of its 2018 Outstanding Achievement Award, while Montreal-based documentary filmmaker **John Walker** will be honored with this year's Focus On retrospective.

The Hot Docs Outstanding Achievement Award is presented annually in recognition of a filmmaker's enduring contribution to the documentary form.

As part of the honor, Hot Docs will screen a retrospective of Kopple's work during the 25th anniversary festival, which this year runs from April 26 to May 6, celebrating her distinguished 46-year filmmaking career.

Kopple's filmography includes *Harlan County, USA* (1976), about a 1973 Kentucky coal miners' strike, and *American Dream* (1991), which recounts the 1985-86 Hormel Foods strike in Minnesota. Kopple won Academy Awards for Best Feature Documentary for both docs. Her most recent documentary, *A Murder in Mansfield*, premiered at the 2017 DOC NYC Film Festival, and ***This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous***, which she directed and produced, premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Her additional feature film credits include *Miss Sharon Jones!* (2015), *Bearing Witness* (2005), *Shut Up and Sing* (2006), *Running from Crazy* (2013), *Woodstock '94* (1998) and *Wild Man Blues* (1997), among others.

Realscreen – January 17, 2018 (2 of 3)

“Barbara is a documentary force whose limitless ingenuity and passion have led her to create some of the most memorable, provocative and illuminating films of our time,” said **Shane Smith**, director of programming for Hot Docs, in a statement. “She is a trailblazer whose extensive body of work resonates with audiences spanning generations and tastes, and we’re honored to recognize Barbara’s exceptional career with the Outstanding Achievement Award at this year’s Festival.”

Walker, meanwhile, will be presented with this year’s Focus On retrospective, which showcases the work of a significant Canadian filmmaker.

Walker’s feature-length documentaries have received 19 nominations and awards from the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television, including the Donald Brittain Award for best social/political documentary.

Further documentary titles in Walker’s library include *Strand-Under the Dark Cloth*, *The Fairy Faith*, *A Drummer’s Dream*, *Arctic Defenders*, and *Quebec My Country Mon Pays* and *Men of the Deeps*, for which he received a 2004 Gemini Award for Best Performing Arts Documentary Program.

A founding member of the Documentary Organization of Canada, Walker has also crafted a number of films for British television, including the first two films in the BBC/October Films trilogy *The Hand of Stalin*; and Channel 4’s *Hidden Children*, *Orphans of Manchuria* and *Distress Signals*.

“A bold, uncompromising filmmaker, John has been a vital voice in Canadian documentary for many years, and his singular vision continues to yield thought-provoking perspectives on meaningful stories from around the world,” said Smith.

The exact films screening in both retrospectives will be announced in March.

Realscreen – January 17, 2018 (3 of 3)

Previous Outstanding Achievement Award honorees have included **Tony Palmer** (2017), **Steve James** (2016), **Patricio Guzmán** (2015), Adam Curtis (2014), Les Blank (2013), Michel Brault (2012), Terence Macartney-Filgate (2011), **Kim Longinotto** (2010), Alanis Obomsawin (2009), Richard Leacock (2008), Heddy Honigmann (2007), Werner Herzog (2006), **Errol Morris** (2005), Michael Maclear (2004), **Nick Broomfield** (2003), **Frederick Wiseman** (2002), D. A. Pennebaker and **Chris Hegedus** (2000) and **Albert Maysles** (1999).

Past Focus On honorees include **Maya Gallus** (2017), Rosie Dransfield (2016), Carole Laganière (2015), **John Zaritsky** (2014), Peter Mettler (2013), **John Kastner** (2012), **Alan Zweig** (2011), Tahani Rached (2010), **Ron Mann** (2009), **Jennifer Baichwal** (2008), Kevin McMahon (2007), Serge Giguère (2006), **Larry Weinstein** (2005), **Nettie Wild** (2004), Shelley Saywell (2003) and **Zacharias Kunuk** (2002).

The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival runs April 26 to May 6 in Toronto.

Hot Docs: Oscar-Winning Filmmaker Barbara Kopple to Receive Career Tribute

7:49 AM PST 1/17/2018 by Etan Vlessing



Courtesy of Andrew Walker

Kopple, who earned Academy Awards for the documentaries 'Harlan County U.S.A.' and 'American Dream,' will receive the 2018 Outstanding Achievement Award.

Two-time Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple is set to be honored at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

Kopple, who won Oscars for *Harlan County, USA* (1976) and *American Dream* (1991), will receive the Outstanding Achievement Award at North America's largest doc festival in Toronto. She will also receive a retrospective of her work and take part in an informal conversation.

"Barbara is a documentary force whose limitless ingenuity and passion have led her to create some of the most memorable, provocative and illuminating films of our time," Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, said Wednesday in a statement.

Kopple's most recent film, *A Murder in Mansfield*, bowed at the 2017 Doc NYC Film Festival and *This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous* premiered at the 2017 Sundance festival.

Past recipients of the Hot Docs honor include Errol Morris, Werner Herzog, Albert Maysles and Tony Palmer in 2017. Hot Docs will also give Canadian filmmaker John Walker the 2018 *Focus On* retrospective honor.

The 25th Hot Docs festival is set to run from April 26 to May 6.

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/hot-docs-oscar-winning-filmmaker-barbara-kopple-receive-career-tribute-1075272>

Hot Docs to honour Montreal filmmaker John Walker

The *Quebec, My Country Mon Pays* director will be recognized with a "Focus On" retrospective, while Barbara Kopple will receive the Outstanding Achievement award.

By Daniele Alcinii
January 17, 2018



Toronto's Hot Docs film festival will honor Montreal-based documentary filmmaker John Walker with this year's Focus On retrospective, which showcases the work of a significant Canadian filmmaker.

Walker most recently directed, wrote and produced the DGC-nominated *Quebec, My Country Mon Pays*. Further documentary titles in Walker's library include *Strand-Under the Dark Cloth*, *The Fairy Faith*, *A Drummer's Dream*, *Arctic Defenders* and *Men of the Deeps*, for which he received a 2004 Gemini Award for Best Performing Arts Documentary Program. All told, his feature-length documentaries have received 19 nominations and awards from the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television over his career, including the Donald Brittain Award for best social/political documentary.

A founding member of the Documentary Organization of Canada, Walker has also crafted a number of films for British television, including the first two films in the BBC/October Films trilogy *The Hand of Stalin*; and Channel 4's *Hidden Children*, *Orphans of Manchuria* and *Distress Signals*.

Hot Docs will screen a selection of Walker's films in the Focus On program during the 25th annual festival, which runs April 26 to May 6 in Toronto.

The festival also announced that Barbara Kopple will receive the Hot Docs Outstanding Achievement Award, which is presented annually in recognition of a filmmaker's enduring contribution to the documentary form.

As part of the honor, Hot Docs will screen a retrospective of Kopple's work during the 25th anniversary festival, celebrating her distinguished 46-year filmmaking career.

Kopple's filmography includes *Harlan County, USA* (1976), about a 1973 Kentucky coal miners' strike, and *American Dream* (1991), which recounts the 1985-86 Hormel Foods strike in

PLAYBACK – January 17, 2018 (2 of 2)

Minnesota. Kopple won Academy Awards for Best Feature Documentary for both docs. Her most recent documentary, *A Murder in Mansfield*, premiered at the 2017 DOC NYC Film Festival, and ***This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous***, which she directed and produced, premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Her additional feature film credits include *Miss Sharon Jones!* (2015), *Bearing Witness* (2005), *Shut Up and Sing* (2006), *Running from Crazy* (2013), *Woodstock '94* (1998) and *Wild Man Blues* (1997), among others.

The exact films screening in both retrospectives will be announced in March.

Past Focus On honorees include Maya Gallus (2017), Rosie Dransfield (2016), Carole Laganière (2015), John Zaritsky (2014), Peter Mettler (2013), John Kastner (2012), Alan Zweig (2011), Tahani Rached (2010), Ron Mann (2009), Jennifer Baichwal (2008), Kevin McMahon (2007), Serge Giguère (2006), Larry Weinstein (2005), Nettie Wild (2004), Shelley Saywell (2003) and Zacharias Kunuk (2002).

Hot Docs to Honour John Walker and Barbara Kopple with Retrospectives

Posted on January 17th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



John Walker in *Quebec Mon Pays My Country*
Photo by Katherine Giguère

By Pat Mullen

This year's Hot Docs film festival honours two prolific documentary icons: John Walker and Barbara Kopple. Walker will be the subject of this year's Focus On retrospective, an annual showcase that highlights the films and career of a veteran Canadian filmmaker. Walker has had a distinguished career as a director and cinematographer. His films include *Arctic Defenders*, *Men of the Deepes*, *The National Parks Project*, *Passage*, and *Strand*, *Under the Dark Cloth*, which won a Genie for best documentary feature. Most recently, he debuted the personal exploration of Canadian/Quebecois identity *Quebec Mon Pays My Country* at Hot Docs 2016 and was a festival favourite. Walker is also a co-founder of DOC, the Documentary Organization of Canada, which advocates for non-fiction filmmakers across the country. Both icons are fitting and overdue choices for the retrospectives at Hot Docs' 25th anniversary.

"A creative visionary and compelling storyteller, we're thrilled to celebrate the work of John Walker with our Focus On retrospective during this year's Festival," said Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, in a statement from the festival. "A bold, uncompromising filmmaker, John has been a vital voice in Canadian documentary for many years, and his singular vision continues to yield thought-provoking perspectives on meaningful stories from around the world."

Kopple receives this year's Outstanding Achievement Award, which acknowledges the work of an international filmmaker who has made a significant contribution to documentary. Kopple has a prolific body of work that includes films on a variety of subjects ranging from social causes to arts and entertainment, often fusing the two, and broke ground for women behind the camera.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – January 17, 2018 (2 of 2)

Her 1976 film *Harlan County USA* (arguably the best documentary ever made) went to the front lines of a miners strike in Kentucky to chronicle the fight of the miners and their wives on the picket lines. The film won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. Kopple's other films include the Oscar winner *American Dream*, the Dixie Chicks/free speech doc *Shut Up and Sing*, and the backstage doc *Miss Sharon Jones!*. Last year, Kopple debuted two docs on the festival circuit, *This is Me: Gigi Gorgeous* and *A Murder in Mansfield*.

"Barbara is a documentary force whose limitless ingenuity and passion have led her to create some of the most memorable, provocative and illuminating films of our time," added Smith. "She is a trailblazer whose extensive body of work resonates with audiences spanning generations and tastes, and we're honoured to recognize Barbara's exceptional career with the Outstanding Achievement Award at this year's Festival."

Film selections for both retrospectives will be announced leading up to the festival. Previous recipients of the Focus On series include Past Focus On honourees include Maya Gallus, Rosie Dransfield, Peter Mettler, Kevin McMahon, and Alan Zweig, while previous honorees of the Outstanding Achievement Award are Steve James, Werner Herzog, and Tony Palmer.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6, 2018.

<http://povmagazine.com/blog/view/hot-docs-to-honour-john-walker-and-barbara-kopple-with-retrospectives>

Hot Docs to honour Kopple, Walker

Canadian festival Hot Docs is to honour two-time Oscar winner Barbara Kopple with this year's Outstanding Achievement Award, while Canadian filmmaker John Walker will receive the mid-career Focus On retrospective.

Adam Benzine

17-01-2018 ©C21Media



Barbara Kopple

Kopple, who won Academy Awards for Best Documentary Feature with 1991's *American Dream* and 1977's *Harlan County USA*, will see a retrospective of her work screened at this year's 25th annual Hot Docs, which runs in Toronto from April 26 to May 6.

The director will attend the festival and participate in a public conversation event, as well as several Q&As after her screenings.

"Barbara is a documentary force whose limitless ingenuity and passion have led her to create some of the most memorable, provocative and illuminating films of our time," said Shane Smith, Hot Docs' director of programming.

"She is a trailblazer whose extensive body of work resonates with audiences spanning generations and tastes."

As for Walker, his feature docs include *Strand-Under the Dark Cloth*, *The Fairy Faith*, *Men of the Deeps*, *A Drummer's Dream*, *Arctic Defenders* and *Quebec My Country Mon Pays*.

He has received 19 nominations and awards from the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television, including the Donald Brittain Award for best social/political documentary.

He has also made several films for UK television, tackling some of the worst tragedies of the 20th century.

He directed and shot the first two films in the BBC/October Films trilogy *The Hand of Stalin* and his credits for UK pubcaster Channel 4 include *Hidden Children*, *Orphans of Manchuria* and *Distress Signals*.

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“A bold, uncompromising filmmaker, John has been a vital voice in Canadian documentary for many years and his singular vision continues to yield thought-provoking perspectives on meaningful stories from around the world,” Smith said.

The Globe and Mail – January 18, 2018

Review: The Final Year follows U.S. diplomats at end of Obama administration



A scene from *The Final Year*, which follows a trio of U.S. diplomats jetting around the world in the final 12 months of the Barack Obama administration.

COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES

SIMON HOUP

PUBLISHED JANUARY 18, 2018

3 out of 4 stars

trio of U.S. diplomats jetting around the world in the final 12 months of the Barack Obama administration – ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power; secretary of state John Kerry; and the deputy national security advisor, Ben Rhodes – he probably envisioned an earnest portrait of the individuals charged with overseeing America's newly enlightened engagements around the world.

And so we get Rhodes rhapsodizing about Obama's belief that "American exceptionalism is rooted in what we stand for and how we act, not our ability to impose our will – because that doesn't work." And Power, juggling her life at home as a mom of two young kids with a trip to a Cameroon refugee camp, where she bears witness to mothers whose daughters have been taken by Boko Haram.

But a wistfulness hangs over the proceedings: Viewers can't help but realize that, just after the final scene, which takes place on the early morning of Donald Trump's inauguration, the new president's administration began to feverishly reverse all the delicate, passionate work we had just observed.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/film-reviews/review-the-final-year-follows-us-diplomats-at-end-of-obama-administration/article37655494/>

In the Fade a thoughtful take on vengeance, plus: The Final Year, Den of Thieves both so-so

Reel Brief reviews of new theatrical openers In the Fade, The Final Year and Den of Thieves, plus Blade Runner 2049 and The Killing of a Sacred Deer on DVD.

By PETER HOWELL Movie Critic

BRUCE DEMARA Entertainment Reporter

Thu., Jan. 18, 2018

In the Fade

Starring Diane Kruger, Numan Acar, Denis Moschitto, Johannes Krisch, Hanna Hilsdorf and Ulrich Brandhoff. Directed by Fatih Akin. Opens Friday at TIFF Bell Lightbox. 106 minutes. 14A

Diane Kruger took Best Actress at Cannes for her lead role in this new drama by German auteur Fatih Akin (*Head-On*), which gives agency to a mother's rage and the most powerful of human emotions.

Kruger seizes and holds every frame as Katja, who is caught with documentary urgency by cinematographer Rainer Klausmann's camera. Katja is a Hamburg woman out to avenge the terrorist bombing that killed her husband and young son, and the subsequent travesty of justice that added to her misery.

She and her Kurdish-German husband Nuri (Numan Acar), had reason to believe they'd settled into happy domesticity with their six-year-old son Rocco (Rafael Santana).

Nuri had been a drug dealer — the movie opens with his prison wedding to Katja — but he'd gone straight, working as a legal adviser to Turks and Kurds at a community centre. Katja worked as his bookkeeper.

The bombing, which Katja narrowly escapes, takes it all away in a brutal flash. The cops are quick to blame Nuri's past. Perhaps this was an act of revenge by drug dealers or the Turkish mob? Or maybe Nuri was being "politically active" again?

Other suspects emerge: husband and wife neo-Nazis André (Ulrich Brandhoff) and Edda (Hanna Hilsdorf). (There is a real-life basis for this: Akin, a German with Turkish roots, was moved to make *In the Fade* by a string of neo-Nazi attacks against immigrants to Germany in the early 2000s.)

A subsequent court trial, ferociously argued by opposing attorneys played by Denis Moschitto and Johannes Krisch, makes a mockery of justice and the concept of "reasonable doubt."

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Katja has now lost not only her family, but also her reason for existence. Akin shows how deep her depression is; he also revealed in the courtroom scene the extent of damage wrought by the nail bomb in the attack.

Katja will decide to take the law into her own hands — she'll soon sport a samurai tattoo — but the film doesn't follow the usual path of the payback thriller, where violence is met with even more violence. All credit to Kruger for breathing life into a character typically designed for the taking of it.

In the Fade, Germany's Oscar entry and a recent Golden Globes winner, offers an unusually thoughtful take on a brutal genre.

It asks questions about grief and justice that resonate with these perilous times, all the more so in light of recent terror atrocities the world over.

Peter Howell

The Final Year

Documentary directed by Greg Barker. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 89 minutes. PG

Filmmaker Greg Barker surely had the best of intentions when he decided to make a film about the final year in office of former U.S. president Barack Obama.

What he ended up with is a film that most people — those intelligent enough to enjoy documentaries — are going to find a real downer simply because we know what's coming next.

(Supporters of President Donald Trump supporters will almost certainly hate for the film for entirely different reasons.)

Barker focuses on the big players on Obama's foreign relations team, including secretary of state John Kerry, U.S. ambassador to the UN Samantha Power, deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes and national security adviser Susan Rice.

What unfolds is rather interesting although only fitfully compelling and poor Rice gets very short shrift for reasons unknown. In fact, Obama gets more screen time than Rice and he's a busy man.

Perhaps with the passing of time, the film will be seen as a moderately useful testament to history. Just not for the near future.

Bruce DeMara

Den of Thieves

Toronto Star – January 18, 2018 (3 of 4)

Starring Gerard Butler, O'Shea Jackson Jr., Pablo Schreiber and Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson. Directed by Christian Gudegast. Opens Friday at GTA theatres. 140 minutes. 14A

"You're not the bad guys. We are!" boastful L.A. cop Nick Flanagan (Gerard Butler) tells apprehended gangbanger Donnie (O'Shea Jackson Jr.), as *Den of Thieves* makes multiples of its title.

Donnie's confused, and so are we, as *London Has Fallen* screenwriter Christian Gudegast barrels through his first directorial effort with scant regard to narrative clarity. It's ostensibly a heist thriller, the plan being to steal \$30 million from L.A.'s supposedly fail-safe Federal Reserve Bank.

The scheme is led by tattooed master criminal Merrimen (Pablo Schreiber) and his main man Levi (Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson), with Donnie driving getaway. Flanagan and his fellow nasties from the L.A. County Sheriff's Department have other ideas, none of them terribly legal.

Here's the real crime: Who shot the editor? Gudegast and co-writer Paul Scheuring forget to keep their eye on the prize, as they detour into the marital misadventures of Butler's scenery-chewing Flanagan.

There are a few good performances here, especially by Schreiber and Jackson. But at a running time of 140 minutes, the heist is sacrificed.

PH

Blade Runner 2049

Starring Ryan Gosling, Harrison Ford, Ana de Armas, Sylvia Hoeks, Robin Wright, Jared Leto and Dave Bautista. Directed by Denis Villeneuve. Available now on DVD. 164 minutes. 14A

Denis Villeneuve's sci-fi stunner digs into the mystery about who is real and who isn't, in a future Earth populated by humans and bioengineered "replicants."

The film, one of my favourites of 2017, makes us wistful for a past that hasn't happened yet — the year 2019 of Ridley Scott's original from 1982, *Blade Runner* — while also contemplating the world three decades hence.

The film demands close attention but also rewards it. Vibrant dystopian cityscapes are captured by cinematographer Roger Deakins, while the score by Benjamin Wallfisch and Hans Zimmer recalls the majestic gloom of the Vangelis original.

The sequel grandly builds on ideas from its more linear predecessor, which overlaid deep thoughts onto a noir action film about a cop named Deckard (Harrison Ford) seeking to violently "retire" four rogue replicants.

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Ryan Gosling is Officer K, a member of the LAPD's recently reactivated Blade Runner unit, who uncovers secrets that shock even the jaded denizens of this ravaged future world. It's a movie of beautiful disorientation. Extras include multiple making-of and prologue featurettes.

PH

The Killing of a Sacred Deer

Starring Nicole Kidman, Colin Farrell and Barry Keoghan. Available Jan. 23 on DVD. Written and directed by Yorgos Lanthimos. 121 minutes. 18A

A kinky horror about collecting debts unpaid, brought to you via the fertile mind and eye of Yorgos Lanthimos (*Dogtooth*, *The Lobster*).

The story turns on Barry Keoghan's character Martin, who is shy and lonely one moment, utterly blood-chilling the next. He leaves a family headed by Colin Farrell and Nicole Kidman wondering what kind of game is afoot.

Farrell plays Steven Murphy, a successful Cincinnati heart surgeon. He has a big house, a beautiful ophthalmologist wife Anna (Kidman) and adorable children Bob (Sunny Suljic) and Kim (Raffey Cassidy).

He also has money to burn on toys like expensive timepieces, one of which he buys for 16-year-old Martin, a fatherless teen he's befriended. Tragedy brought them together: Martin's dad died on Steven's operating table.

The film makes you squirm as much as the gallows humour makes you laugh. It comes on at first like the blandest of TV hospital dramas, although the strange camera angles, spooky music and affected speech of the characters — all Lanthimos hallmarks — signal that something strange is afoot. Extras include "An Impossible Conundrum" featurette.

PH

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/review/2018/01/18/in-the-fade-a-thoughtful-take-on-vengeance-plus-the-final-year-den-of-thieves-both-so-so.html>

Review: ‘Where You’re Meant to Be’

Andrew Parker January 18, 2018 6:00 am



One doesn't need to have a passion for or encyclopedic knowledge of Scottish folk tunes to enjoy the engaging, humorous, and uplifting documentary *Where You're Meant to Be*. That's good because the documentary's chief subject – former Arab Strap lead singer Aidan Moffat – can barely be arsed to give a hoot about it himself.

After establishing himself globally as the front-man for one of the UK indie rock scenes' most seminal acts, Moffat got the idea a few years ago that he wanted to go out on the road singing ditties and shanties of times gone by, updated only slightly for modern sensibilities. While hardly enamoured with antiquated Scottish folk songs (many of which involve getting blind drunk, dying, cheating on a spouse, and threatening someone with murder, sometimes all of the above in the same song), Moffat thought it would be good for a laugh; a chance to play retooled classics specifically in communities that probably never heard of his indie rock roots.

The drama and charm of *Where You're Meant to Be* is two-fold. First, Moffat is kinda shitty at his new vocation, and the singer thankfully embraces that. His first concert on this tour – captured brilliantly from several inspired angles by director Paul Fegan – finds Moffat playing aimlessly to a room full of drunks who are either scowling or flat out ignoring that anyone's even playing music in the pub. Moffat gets better from this point, but there's something charming about watching an established musician floundering. It's even better that Moffat embraces failure with open arms and a smile. Fegan perfectly frames *Where You're Meant to Be* around one man's quest to try something new and have a giggle in the process.

Fegan also mines a lot of weight from the controversial nature of Moffat's seemingly lighthearted agenda. Not everyone takes kindly to Moffat adding modern pop culture references (like Google Maps and sexting) and hard edged cussing to a bunch of already borderline or outright inappropriate songs. This controversy is glimpsed through the eyes and opinions of 79-year old Sheila Stewart, one of the country's most celebrated folk

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singers. As one admirer in *Where You're Meant to Be* describes her, "she's the difference between a folk singer and someone who just sings folk songs."

Always someone who took her craft very seriously, Stewart isn't afraid to tell Moffat to his face that she doesn't sanction his buffoonery, and he's left with some heavy thinking to do as a result. Those songs genuinely mean something to Stewart and many like her, and she'll be damned if any of them are mocked, even without intended malice. In the film's most memorable scene – a car ride that functions as Moffat and Stewart's first face-to-face encounter – the elder musician chastises the younger Moffat for interpreting metaphors too literally, and suggesting that he never did a lick of research into what these old songs meant before deciding to perform them.

It's a powerful moment, especially since Fegan and Moffat make it known only seconds into the film that Stewart passed away not long after filming of *Where You're Meant to Be* was completed. Moffat narrates his journey from the perspective of what Stewart's criticisms and suggestions meant to him on a personal level. Through an expert marriage of striking imagery (much better than the average road picture about travelling musicians) and Moffat's elegantly delivered narration, Fegan's film becomes a fun, lighthearted bit of soul searching and memoriam at the same time. It's never sad or mournful, and although Stewart and Moffat get off on the wrong foot, the contention between the two remains respectful throughout.

Like most films about serious artists that suffer disagreements, *Where You're Meant to Be* pits two opposing forces that are more alike than they might realize. Both display a huge amount of vanity and hubris. Moffat might have his head in the clouds simply by concocting such a tour in the first place, but when Stewart suggests that she wants the legacy of Scottish folk music to die with her, she might outdo her younger contemporary in terms of overall artistic arrogance. Both take what they do very seriously, even if Stewart sees Moffat as a joke. Although Moffat is essentially doing this to take the piss out of dreary classical Scottish tunes, he's approaching the gag as professionally as possible. Both can be obstinate and arrogant, but they also showcase a good sense of humour.

Where You're Meant to Be is a gorgeously realized, profoundly moving, and often hilarious look at bridging a gap between new and old styles. It would make for a delightful double bill with Agnes Varda and JR's similarly themed *Faces, Places*, and considering that their film was one of the best documentaries of the decade, that's high praise for Moffat and Fegan's work.

Where You're Meant to Be opens at The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Saturday, January 20, 2018.

Barbara Kopple Will Receive Hot Docs' 2018 Outstanding Achievement Award

BY Kelsey Moore January 18, 2018

Documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple is truly a force to be reckoned with. She has received not one but two Academy Awards atop a bevy of other honors. Now, Kopple will receive the Outstanding Achievement Award at this year's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, a retrospective of Kopple's career thus far will accompany the award. Director of Programming Shane Smith said that Kopple's "limitless ingenuity and passion have led her to create some of the most memorable, provocative, and illuminating films of our time."

Kopple is one of three women to receive this honor to date. Kim Longinotto was recognized in 2010, and Heddy Honigman received the same honor three years prior. As Kopple told Women and Hollywood last year, "I think for many years now women have made a major impact on documentary filmmaking, and many have been at the forefront of the documentary community."

Kopple received Academy Awards for "Harland County U.S.A." and "American Dream." Recent works include "Running from Crazy," "Miss Sharon Jones!", and 2017 Sundance favorite "This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous." Kopple will be recognized with the Laura Ziskin Lifetime Achievement Award at next month's Athena Film Festival.

The 25th Hot Docs festival will run from April 26 to May 6.

Where to fuel your mind, body and soul this winter in Toronto

January 30, 2018 Sonya Davidson Toronto Tourism, Travel

Wintertime in this city is full of things to do and while some of us enjoy hitting the slopes, skating outdoors, and wandering through the glow of twinkling lights, there is much more! We might have more time to fuel our mind, body and soul. Here are some great ways to learn, or try, something new and feed our curious minds.

CURIOUS MINDS Weekend at Hot Docs Cinema hosts a series of innovative thinkers in thought-provoking discussions and panel conversations. This year's line up includes legendary editor Tina Brown discussing her best-selling book *The Vanity Fair Diaries*. Smashing the Patriarchy features restaurateur Jen Agg, along with labour lawyer Emma Phillips and City Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam. David Crombie and Nam Kiwanuka will come to gather to discuss their passion for heritage preservation in Toronto. Raptors' President Masai Ujiri will speak about building a global sports juggernaut as one of Canada's most innovative executives and philanthropists. Full line up of speakers and tickets available at hotdocscinema.ca



TASTEMAKERS SERIES at TOCA Ritz Carlton Hotel is designed for culinary enthusiasts that feature interactive events and food experiences. Included on the schedule Fresh Pasta Making Class (January 27) with Chef Daniele Trivero, Valentine's Dessert Making Class (February 13) with Pastry Chef Gael Moutet, and a Preserved Food Cooking Class (March 24) that teaches you how to can, freeze, dry and preserve food with Chef Daniele Trivero. More info & prices at www.tocarestaurant.com

MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS CLASSES with Radiate Happy. You're ready to let that shit go? Take a step in getting rid of negative energy of the past and releasing expectations for the future. Take a deep breath and start here. Radiate Happy has several workshops planned across the city (and some are free!). An example, beginners are invited learn how to nurture

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your intuition through both movement and meditation on February 3rd at Lululemon (318 Queen Street West) \$15 per person, sign up online. More info at radiatehappy.com

ART F*CKING THERAPY hosted by MindMatters at The Drake Hotel: No artistic experience required for everyone to get creative AF. Learn how to destress in this workshop using a mix of painting, collaging and journalling. Mind Matters is a group dedicated to spreading the practice and techniques of improving your mind. Learn how to become more efficient, stay calm or be more productive. February 13. Tickets \$45 each. More info here -> <https://www.ticketfly.com/event/1625012>

AURA READINGS by roseaura.ca : You've tried tarot cards, and palm readings. You've had your future told before, but have you ever experienced an aura reading? We were fortunate to give this a try during TIFF with Swarovski. The aura reading is done in the moment. Evelyn takes an image through her aura camera lens and explains what you've been going through in the past couple of weeks, where your energy levels are now, and what you should be more aware of for the immediate future. Aura readings have been used throughout the ages as both a healing and learning practice. Interesting perspective and you get to keep your aura image photograph. She has some upcoming dates available (Feb 4, 18, and 25 in Toronto) email her for more info at evelyn@roseaura.ca

Review: ‘The Group of Seven Guitar Project’

Andrew Parker January 31, 2018 10:15 am



The Canadian documentary *The Group of Seven Guitar Project*, produced in conjunction with the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, looks at two art forms that one wouldn't expect to go together as well as they ultimately do: the landscape paintings of the famed titular core of artists and the construction of playable, handcrafted guitars. It sounds like quite the leap, but it's surprisingly thoughtful, and filmmakers Jason Charters and Liam Romalis do a fine job of bridging this thematic and artistic gap.

The Group of Seven Guitar Project stems from the brainchild of luthier Linda Manzer, who in 2014 got an idea for a unique Canada 150 heritage project: the creation of guitars that would honour some of the country's greatest painters. Not only was Linda taken by her idea immediately, but it was one that had great personal resonance. In the 1970s, Manzer was part of her own group of seven: a band of luthiers who all apprenticed and worked with noted guitar craftsman Jean Larrivée. Much like the original Group of Seven did when they changed the face of landscape painting, Larrivée's co-workers and disciples supported and pushed each other to do better work while living in and around Toronto. Manzer was able to "get the band back together," and the similarities between their kinship and that of the Group of Seven were too tempting to ignore.

Manzer takes a closer look at the works of Lawren Harris, while Sergi de Jonge takes a crack at J.E.H. MacDonald, Tony Duggan-Smith tackles Arthur Lismer, David Wren channels Franklin Carmichael, George Gray analyzes Frank Johnston, William "Grit" Laskin reimagines F.H. Varley, Larrivée interprets A.Y. Jackson, and they all team up to create a special eighth guitar in memory of Tom Thomson. *The Group of Seven Guitar Project* sits down with each of these guitar makers to find out how they connected their craft to the vision of their chosen painter, and the film watches as these newfound works of musical art are played by some of Canada's finest guitarists.

The most charming thing about *The Group of Seven Guitar Project* is that it's a film that could have easily been mediocre drivel akin to an instructional film meant to be played on a loop at the McMichael Gallery while people made their way through an installation. Charters and Romalis dodge the potential pitfalls of their project by nicely balancing the project's personal, historical, performative, and professional threads, giving equal time to every aspect of the project.

The Gate – January 31, 2018 (2 of 2)



The Group of Seven Guitar Project doesn't dwell too heavily on the already tackled histories of the painters whose shadows loom large over this homage, and instead looks at the nuts and bolts of how such an ambitious undertaking would come together, and the relationships shared between the luthiers. It's one thing to look at a painting and discern some form of artistic, personal, or historic meaning from it, but it's another to take that interpretation and create a tactile and aural piece of usable art from it. Paintings are meant to be looked at and admired. The guitars crafted by this new Group of Seven are meant to be seen, heard, and handled while simultaneously functioning as a tribute to some of Canada's most revered painters.

There's no drama to be found in *The Group of Seven Guitar Project*; not that it needs any. Everyone gets along, and the editorial structure of Charters and Romalis' film is rudimentary, functional, and straightforward. There isn't too much of a deep dive that's done into the technical construction of the guitars outside of some montage footage that has been nicely cut into split screened performances of the instruments in use. The project literally speaks for itself through the visual and audio representation of these guitars and the personalities of the people who crafted them, so in a sense, Charters and Romalis have most of the heavy lifting already done for them before even stepping up to the camera.

What emerges from *The Group of Seven Guitar Project* is a documentary that's better than many might expect to see from a film with such a dry sounding premise. It's the kind of film that I like to call "coffee viewing": a specific kind of movie or program that's gentle and pleasant enough to compliment a good cuppa joe. It's comforting and insightful without exactly being vital or indispensable. In short, it's a nice film that's nicely produced. It will probably be of more interest to those keen on learning more about either Group of Seven, but it's charming enough to engage with almost any viewer.

The Group of Seven Guitar Project opens at The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Friday, February 2, 2018.

You can also get a look at the guitars created for the project through March of 2018 at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario.

<https://www.thegate.ca/film/032043/review-group-seven-guitar-project/>

SHEDOESTHECITY'S TOP 10 @ BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2018

POSTED ON JANUARY 31, 2018

There is no shortage of ways to mark Black History Month in Toronto this year. Here's a few we thought you shouldn't miss:

1. Game Changers at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema (506 Bloor St W): This February, Hot Docs pays tribute to Black cultural visionaries and innovators who inspire us to push ahead at a time of political uncertainty and profound social change. Screenings include *I Am Not Your Negro*, *Winnie*, *Marley*, *Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child*, *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise* and more. Full schedule [here](#). February 11-25.
2. Celebrate Black Authors at A Different Booklist (777 Bathurst St): Bring the kids for readings and special appearances by Children/YA authors Ndiya Anderson-Yantha, El-Farouk Khaki & Troy Jackson and Fartumo Kusow. February 1, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
3. Kuumba at Harbourfront (235 Queen's Quay W): Through dialogue and artistic expression, Kuumba 2018 addresses the international struggle for Black liberation today. This year's Kuumba is a series of events that runs throughout the month of February featuring the work of photographers, filmmakers and community leaders, including Trey Anthony, Gina Yashere, Alison Duke and more. February 3-24.
4. Ubuntu Drum & Dance Theatre at Parkdale Branch (1303 Queen St. W): Join us for an exciting performance of Caribbean and African rhythm and dance, performed by the kids of Toronto's own Ubuntu ensemble. February 2, 7-8 p.m.
5. Policing Black Lives at Toronto Reference Library (789 Yonge St): A candid discussion on the complicated relationship between Canada's Black communities and the police. With Robyn Maynard, author of *Policing Black Lives*, civil rights lawyer Anthony Morgan and *Toronto Star's* Shree Paradkar. February 6, 7-8 p.m.
6. EBONY EXPRESSIONS – Black History Month Celebration ft. Art, Fashion & Music (366 Queen St. E): EBONY EXPRESSIONS presented by #EBEX2018, is a free Black History Month celebration showcasing arts, fashion, music & food. Come experience raffles, live painting, an arts exhibit, African-inspired fashion shows, live music, and Afro-Caribbean food and drink. February 25, 3-8 p.m.
7. Black HERstory Month Pop-Up (2459 Islington Ave): A pop-up coffee shop celebrating of the contributions of Black women. Speakers include Palmonia Gordon, author of *Order It!*, and Ogonna Jideobi, creative director of Noble Storytellers. February 24, 7-9 p.m.
8. 24 Hours of Blackness at OCADU (100 McCaul): This installation sheds light on the practicality of being a Black person and provides a platform to tell the stories shared as a community – all this, through the format of an interactive barbershop. February 9, 5:30-11 p.m.
9. Black Voices at Isabel Bader Theatre (93 Charles St. W): Hosted by The Black Students Association of the University of Toronto, this is a place for you to connect with other Black individuals who believe in the power of connection, the power of thought, and how it can manifest into action. The theme of this year's conference is "What's Next?" February 2, 6-11 p.m.

She Does the City – January 31, 2018 (2 of 2)

10. *BRUK OUT!* at The Royal (608 College St). The Toronto debut of *BRUK OUT!* A Dancehall Queen documentary. The raunchy dance craze from Jamaica attracts devotees from around the world, drawn to the scene for its fierce energy, all enveloping embrace and legendary twerking. This film follows half a dozen women overcoming a host of issues to travel thousands of miles to Montego Bay for the biggest title in the land: International Dancehall Queen. Hosted by storyteller, speaker and Toronto personality Bee Quammie. February 16, 8 p.m.

Hot Docs, EFP team on Euro program; ‘Made In’ focus

unveiled

By Daniele Alcinii

February 5, 2018



Canadian international documentary festival Hot Docs has partnered with the European Film Promotion (EFP) to launch a program titled ‘The Changing Face of Europe’ during this year’s event.

The pan-European tract will showcase 10 new documentaries, each examining the current cultural, geographic, economic and political factors affecting Europe today.

Selected filmmakers will participate in Hot Docs-related industry events over the festival’s schedule, which runs April 26 to May 6 in Toronto. The workshops and pitches aim to enable the documentarians to expand their professional development on an international scale, and increase their film’s access to North American and international markets.

Formed in 1997, the EFP network incorporates 36 national promotion organizations from 35 European countries and works to promote and market European cinema worldwide. Since 2017, the organization has provided film sales support for European world sales companies to market films selected for Hot Docs, helping to stimulate distribution of European films to North America and beyond.

“The program reflects on the ‘new Europe’ with its current political and social changes; and shines a light on the rich and vivid diversity of European documentaries,” said EFP managing director Sonja Heinen in a statement. “The EFP member organizations have

Realscreen – February 5, 2018 (2 of 2)

nominated an excellent array of films and we are excited to see the final selection curated by the programmers at Hot Docs.”

“By showcasing new voices and fresh perspectives with ‘The Changing Face of Europe’, we’re pleased to be able to introduce these films and their talented creators to the North American industry and to Toronto audiences,” added **Shane Smith**, director of programming for Hot Docs.

Elsewhere, the 10-day festival will present recent works from Mexico for its ‘Made In’ program.

Run in collaboration with the Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE), the program will feature a selection of “bold, uncompromising and wildly imaginative documentaries” that showcase the creative talent at work in the country today.

The 2018 edition of the Toronto-set festival will mark the second time films from Mexican directors have been showcased in the program.

The Spanish-speaking country was last featured in the tract a decade ago in 2008.

This year’s programming titles will be announced in March.

Past countries spotlighted in the ‘Made In’ category have included Japan (2017), Australia (2016), India (2015), Denmark (2014), Poland (2013), Southeastern Europe (2012), Italy (2011), South America (2010), South Korea (2009), Mexico (2008), Brazil (2007), Japan (2006), South Africa (2004), and Taiwan (2003).

“Mexico is a culturally vibrant country rich with history and tradition, and we’re so pleased to spotlight its new documentaries at Hot Docs this year,” said Hot Docs’ Smith in a statement. “Now seems like a perfect time to further connect with, and explore, the dynamic stories being told by Mexican filmmakers.”

<http://realscreen.com/2018/02/05/hot-docs-efp-team-on-euro-program-made-in-focus-unveiled/>

Hot Docs launches Changing Face of Europe program

The Toronto documentary festival has also announced its Made In program will highlight works from Mexico.

By Daniele Alcinii
February 5, 2018

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Hot Docs Spotlights Europe and Mexico in New Programming Announcements

Posted on February 5th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Fire at Sea, one of the recent European docs to spotlight contemporary culture and politics on the continent
Kino Lorber

By Pat Mullen

Hot Docs announced today a new partnership and programme for its upcoming festival. The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival will debut the new 10-film sidebar 'The Changing Face of Europe.' The Changing Face of Europe is a collaboration with EFP (European Film Promotion) and will span a diverse sampling of international docs from the continent that highlight contemporary socio-political shifts. With Brexit (and the potential re-vote/Bre-entry) being one of the defining cultural shifts of the moment, as well as waves of refugees entering the continent in the current global migration crisis, a spotlight on Europe gives the festival an easy-to-navigate shot of topical films.

"We're very excited to partner with European Film Promotion for the first time during this year's Festival to present a selection of films highlighting the stories and issues that are affecting the Continent today" said Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs in a statement from the festival. "By showcasing new voices and fresh perspectives with The Changing Face of Europe, we're pleased to be able to introduce these films and their talented creators to the North American industry and to Toronto audiences." European docs in the spotlight of late include Agnès Varda and JR's whimsical Oscar nominee Faces Places, Ai Weiwei's migration saga Human Flow, and Gianfranco Rosi's eye-opening Fire at Sea.

The Changing Face of Europe combines the public and industry facing aspects of Hot Docs. Filmmakers selected for the programme will be invited to participate in pitches and industry summits with buyers and distributors while engaging audiences in hot topics shaping the globe. EFP aims to increase the visibility and marketability of European docs and this collaboration marks the organization's first partnership with the festival. "We are delighted to strike up this new partnership with Hot Docs for European documentary films," added Sonja Heinen,

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Managing Director of EFP. “The programme reflects on the ‘new Europe’ with its current political and social changes; and shines a light on the rich and vivid diversity of European documentaries. The EFP member organisations have nominated an excellent array of films and we are excited to see the final selection curated by the programmers at Hot Docs. We are honored to be part of this prestigious and important festival and look forward to presenting the European filmmakers to industry and audience alike.”

Hot Docs also announced that it would add a little spice to the 2018 festival by showcasing Mexican cinema in the annual Made In programme. “Mexico is a culturally vibrant country rich with history and tradition, and we’re so pleased to spotlight its new documentaries at Hot Docs this year,” said Smith. “Now seems like a perfect time to further connect with, and explore, the dynamic stories being told by Mexican filmmakers. A selection of bold, uncompromising and wildly imaginative documentaries will showcase the incredibly creative talent at work in the country today.” And with Mexico in the spotlight with the cultural divides created by Trump, a focus on the Latin American nation and Europe lets the festival explore both sides of the wall.

Made in Mexico is a collaboration with the Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE). Recent Mexican doc hits on the festival circuit include Chavela, The Devil’s Freedom, *Narco Cultura*, and *Who is Dayani Cristal?*.

Films for both programmes will be announced in March. Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6, 2018. This year marks the festival’s 25th anniversary.

Hot Docs 2018 eyes Europe and Mexico

The 2018 edition of the Hot Docs film festival will emphasize documentaries from Europe and Mexico, in a time of global change.



The Ted Rogers Hot Docs Cinema on Bloor will host the Hot Docs festival for another year. (JOSEPH MICHAEL PHOTO)

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic

Tues., Feb. 6, 2018

The 2018 edition of the Hot Docs film festival will emphasize documentaries from Europe and Mexico, in a time of global change.

A special program called *The Changing Face of Europe* will showcase 10 new docs that illustrate a continent in transition — culturally, geographically, economically and politically.

“The program reflects on the ‘new Europe’ with its current political and social changes, and shines a light on the rich and vivid diversity of European documentaries,” said Sonja Heinen, the managing director of European Film Promotion, which is collaborating with Hot Docs for the first time. Participating filmmakers will also be involved in industry events such as workshops, pitches and meetings with potential buyers.

As well as gazing eastward, this year’s Hot Docs fest will look way south, with recent works from Mexico featured in the annual *Made In* program.

“Mexico is a culturally vibrant country rich with history and tradition, and we’re so pleased to spotlight its new documentaries at Hot Docs this year,” said Shane Smith, the Hot Docs programming director, in a news release.

“Now seems like a perfect time to further connect with, and explore, the dynamic stories being told by Mexican filmmakers. A selection of bold, uncompromising and wildly imaginative documentaries will showcase the incredibly creative talent at work in the country today.”

The program will be run in collaboration with the Mexican Film Institute (IMCINE). Film titles will be announced in March.

Toronto Star – February 6, 2018 (2 of 2)

Past *Made In* programs have focused on Japan (2017), Australia (2016), India (2015), Denmark (2014), Poland (2013), Southeastern Europe (2012), Italy (2011), South America (2010), South Korea (2009), Mexico (2008), Brazil (2007), Japan (2006), South Africa (2004) and Taiwan (2003).

Hot Docs is North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market. This year's 25th annual edition runs April 26 to May 6.

Read more about:

[Hot Docs](#), [Mexico](#), [Europe](#)

A Fantastic Woman's quest for dignity and love, Entanglement's smarts and surprises, and more: Reel Brief reviews

Mini-reviews of four movies coming to cinemas — *A Fantastic Woman*, *Spettacolo, Machines* and *Entanglement* — plus Roman J. Israel, Esq. on DVD.

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic
BRUCE DEMARA Entertainment Reporter
Thu., Feb. 8, 2018

A Fantastic Woman

Starring Daniela Vega, Francisco Reyes, Aline Kuppenheim, Nicolas Saavedra and Luis Gnecco. Directed by Sebastian Lelio. Opens Friday at TIFF Bell Lightbox. 104 minutes. 14A

During one of the more heartless encounters of Sebastian Lelio's transporting love story *A Fantastic Woman*, a clod named Bruno mansplains empathy and compassion to transgender woman Martina (Daniela Vega).

Bruno (Nicolas Saavedra) possesses neither virtue.

"I don't know what you are," he rudely tells Marina, as he informs her she needs to move out of the Santiago apartment she shared with her recently deceased lover Orlando (Francisco Reyes), Bruno's father.

Orlando's ex-wife, Sonia (Aline Kuppenheim), utters a similar offensive phrase, adding the knife-twist that she considers Marina "a chimera."

The grieving family is obviously having trouble processing not only Marina's personal reality, but also that of 57-year-old Orlando, who loved a transgender torch singer some 30 years younger than him and at least one social class removed.

But it's the family's problem, not Marina's. She seeks dignity, not fake empathy or false compassion, and she's determined to have it. Here filmmaker Lelio and his co-writer Gonzalo Maza exhibit more of the wisdom they brought to their earlier collaboration *Gloria*, the story of a woman equally set on retaining her self-esteem while searching for love.

One of five films competing for Best Foreign Language Film honours at the March 4 Academy Awards, *A Fantastic Woman* informs by showing rather than by saying.

Marina commands the poise and mystery of a femme fatale from *noir* cinema — think Hitchcock by way of Almodovar as influences for both Vega and Lelio — as she navigates a world where everything she does and is comes under suspicion from authority figures and busybodies.

Toronto Star – February 8, 2018 (2 of 4)

The circumstances of Orlando's death, a heart attack and subsequent fall, would not likely be questioned in any other context. But they are here.

Recurring symbols of mirrors and water (a womb analogy), along with Matthew Herbert's intoxicating score of flutes and strings, contribute to a pervasive feeling of becoming unmoored. But at its core, *A Fantastic Woman* is the story of genuine love, something requires no definition.

We are made aware that not everything will be explained or neatly wrapped up. That's just how things are, in art as well as life, a fact that the best of films illustrate so well.

Also opening: Brian Crano's romantic comedy *Permission*, starring Rebecca Hall and Dan Stevens; and Rob Grant's hybrid horror *Fake Blood*, starring Grant, Mike Kovac and Chelsey Reist. Both at the Carlton.

Peter Howell

Spettacolo

Documentary on unique stage play by residents of a Tuscan village. Directed by Jeff Malmberg and Chris Shellen. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 91 minutes. STC

A near-death experience with Nazi storm troopers during the Second World War prompted inhabitants of the tiny Tuscan town of Monticchiello to make a stage play as a form of group therapy, with the entire village participating.

It felt so good, it's been an annual event since then, with the story changing to reflecting local happenings and moods: "Our life became one long play," as one villager puts it. But when *Marwencol* filmmakers Jeff Malmberg and Chris Shellen arrived in the town in 2012 to begin documenting this marvellous tradition, they found a tug between tradition and modernism.

The original players and set builders are dying off, and their offspring are less enthusiastic about writing, rehearsing and presenting the "autodrama" to visiting tourists. Concerns about the economy, farming and "end of the world" malaise figure into discussions both on and off the stage.

Spettacolo serves as a hymn to the creative process, but also as a eulogy of sorts to the let's-put-on-a-show spirit of pre-digital times. Come for the drama, stay for the gorgeous scenery.

PH

Machines

Directed by Rahul Jain. Opens Friday at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. 71 minutes. STC

Toronto Star – February 8, 2018 (3 of 4)

Filmmaker Rahul Jain takes an inside look at life inside a massive garment factory located in India's Gujarat state, uncovering the appalling working conditions of employees there.

It's an eye-opening sight and one almost certain to provoke outrage and despair.

Dialogue takes a back seat to the visual as cinematographer Rodrigo Trejo Villanueva shoots scene after scene of the mechanical contraptions at work and detailing the drudgery workers face every day. The images are arresting in their authenticity.

Some workers talk with sorrowful simplicity about their lives amidst dark and dank interiors. One man explains why unions are so ineffective while a boss infuriatingly complains about the fact the "sincerity level" of employees has fallen over the years.

In one scene, a young worker — barely a teenager — struggles to stay awake as he labours.

One aggrieved worker notes that filmmakers — like government ministers — make occasional appearances but nothing ever changes. Jain is at least making the effort.

This is not an easy film to watch but it is an important one.

Bruce DeMara

Entanglement

Starring Thomas Middleditch, Jess Weixler. Directed by Jason James. Opens Friday at Cineplex Yonge/Dundas & Winston Churchill theatres. 85 minutes. 14A

Ben's life is a mess. After enduring the loss of the love of his life as well as a failed suicide attempt, he decides to seek psychological counselling.

When he encounters a young woman who may or may not be the adoptive sister he almost had, it throws his life into further turmoil. Or perhaps it's the tonic he needs to break out of a static train wreck his life has become.

Ben is a great believer that life is filled with disparate connections or "entanglements" that may, albeit cryptically, point the way forward.

With his sad puppy dog eyes, Thomas Middleditch is an endearing protagonist as Ben.

Jess Weixler is a lot of fun as Hanna, a wild child of a woman given to bouts of impulsiveness.

Diana Bang is also very good as her counterpoint, Tabby, Ben's well-meaning next-door neighbour.

The script by Jason Filiault is nicely crafted and intelligent with a late twist that upends everything.

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It's not exactly a date movie (unless a breakup is in the works) but it's a pleasant enough story, thanks to a smart script and some appealing performances.

BD

Roman J. Israel, Esq. (DVD)

Starring Denzel Washington, Colin Farrell and Carmen Ejogo. Written and directed by Dan Gilroy. Out Feb. 13 on DVD. 122 minutes. PG

Denzel Washington has a Best Actor nom at the March 4 Oscars for his most interesting character in a decade, one who insists on the use of the "Esq." suffix. To him it means "slightly above 'gentleman,' below 'knight.'"

It's a bit dubious, although he does try to be chivalrous. Roman wears rumpled suits, sports an outdated Afro, lives in one of L.A.'s shabbier neighbourhoods and dines on peanut-butter sandwiches for dinner.

Roman has toiled for years in the back room of a community-minded defence attorney, a beneficent boss who does the courtroom work, while relying on Roman's brilliant legal mind.

The arrangement works well until the day a heart attack fells Roman's benefactor. A sharp young attorney named George Pierce (Colin Farrell) arrives to change the default mode of the firm from *pro bono* to profits.

Seems like we know where it's going, but writer/director Dan Gilroy (*Nightcrawler*) has a couple of changeups in mind that will prompt us to view the situation in a different light.

Extras include eight deleted scenes and three making-of featurettes.

PH

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/review/2018/02/08/a-fantastic-womans-quest-for-dignity-and-love-entanglements-smarts-and-surprises-and-more-reel-brief-reviews.html>

Hot Docs unveils Ted Rogers Fund recipients

By Playback Daily

February 8, 2018

The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund will distribute US\$82,000 (CDN\$103,000) across six Canadian doc projects.

The **\$1 million fund** was established in 2016 with a gift from the Rogers Foundation to provide financial support to Canadian doc filmmakers.

This year's recipients include Peter Mishara's *The Artists*, which tells the stories of early video game creators; as well as Trinetra Productions' ***The Daughter Tree***, directed by Rama Rau (*No Place to Hide: The Rehtaeh Parsons Story*). Rau's doc explores India's cultural preference for male children, while following a midwife who advocates for baby girls.

Also receiving a share of the coin is Maureen Judge's *Girls on the Bus*. Produced by Makin' Movies, the doc examines the pressures facing five teenage girls in their final year of high school.

Meanwhile, Michèle Stephenson's *Hispaniola* and **Maya Gallus'** *The Heat: A Kitchen Revolution* have also been selected. *Hispaniola* examines the impact of the Dominican Republic Supreme Court ruling to strip citizenship from Dominicans of Haitian descent, while *The Heat* gives a behind-the-scenes look at professional cooking by following seven female chefs.

Lastly, ***Send Us Your Brother*** from Notice Productions Inc. and the National Film Board (NFB) also received funding. Directed by **Nisha Pahuja**, the doc that tells the story of "the making of a modern Indian man."

In other funding news, Hot Docs announced the recipients of a number of other programs.

Realscreen – February 8, 2018 (2 of 2)

The Hot Docs-Blue Ice Fund selected nine African projects to split US\$10,000 (CDN\$125,000). The recipients are: Kenya's *Better Sundays* from The Film and Laundry Company (directed by Lydia Matata and produced by Achiro Patricia Oluoch); *The Good Black* from South African production company Zakukuzwe Picture Projects and Cool Take Pictures (directed by Milisuthando Bongela, produced by Batana Vundla and Marion Isaacs); South Africa's *How To Steal A Country* from Uhuru Productions Pty Ltd. and SPV Curveball Productions Pty Ltd (directed by Mark Kaplan and **Rehad Desai**, produced by Zivia Desai Keiper and Rehad Desai); *My Friend Gadhgahi* from Tunisia's Majez Production (directed and produced by Rafik Omrani); and *Searching for Kikhia* from Desert Power, produced and directed by Jihan Kikhia.

The CrossCurrents Doc Fund short/interactive strand selected director and producer Mira Sidawi's *The Wall* to receive a US\$8,000 (CAD\$10,000) production grant. In addition to the financial support, Sidawi will also receive a Hot Docs Fellowship – comprised of travel, accommodation and accreditation for the Hot Docs Film fest and enrollment in the cinema's Doc Accelerator program.

Meanwhile, the CrossCurrent Doc Fund theatrical strand selected Afghanistan's *Midnight Traveler* from Hassan Fazili and the U.S. project *Two Gods* (directed by Zeshawn Ali) as this year's recipients of the US\$24,000 (CDN\$30,000) prize.

PLAYBACK – February 8, 2018 (1 of 2)

Six Canadian docs to share \$103K from Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund

Peter Mishara's *The Artists* and Rama Rau's *The Daughter Tree* are among the projects selected.

By Lauren Malyk
February 8, 2018

The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund will distribute \$103,000 across six Canadian doc projects.

The **\$1 million fund** was established in 2016 with a gift from the Rogers Foundation to provide financial support to Canadian doc filmmakers.

This year's recipients include Peter Mishara's *The Artists*, which tells the stories of early video game creators; as well as Trinetra Productions' *The Daughter Tree*, directed by Rama Rau (*No Place to Hide: The Rehtaeh Parsons Story*). Rau's doc explores India's cultural preference for male children, while following a midwife who advocates for baby girls.

Also receiving a share of the coin is Maureen Judge's *Girls on the Bus*. Produced by Makin' Movies, the doc examines the pressures facing five teenage girls in their final year of high school.

Meanwhile, Michèle Stephenson's *Hispaniola* and Maya Gallus' *The Heat: A Kitchen Revolution* have also been selected. *Hispaniola* examines the impact of the Dominican Republic Supreme Court ruling to strip citizenship from Dominicans of Haitian descent, while *The Heat* gives a behind-the-scenes look at professional cooking by following seven female chefs.

Lastly, *Send Us Your Brother* from Notice Productions Inc. and the National Film Board (NFB) also received funding. Directed by Nisha Pahuja, the doc that tells the story of "the making of a modern Indian man."

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PLAYBACK – February 8, 2018 (2 of 2)

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Africa Hub Grows Its Business in Berlin

By **CHRISTOPHER VOURLIAS**



CREDIT: COURTESY OF BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL

Building on the success of its inaugural edition last year, the Berlinale Africa Hub will return to its location next to the historic Martin Gropius Bau to offer a glimpse of trends in the dynamic and fast-growing pan-African film market.

With a focus on virtual reality and 360-degree storytelling, streaming platforms and digital disruptors, the initiative hopes to “make African innovation more visible within the portfolio of the European Film Market,” according to EFM director Matthijs Wouter Knol.

By exploring how leapfrog technologies are transforming the business of filmmaking and distribution on the continent, the Hub will highlight the ways that local innovators are looking to cash in on the still largely untapped African market.

“The Berlinale Africa Hub is a place where we’d like to look into the future and say, ‘This is not about copy-pasting existing structures [from other] parts of the world,’” says Knol. “I think audience potential in Africa is absolutely there ... [but] to reach those audiences, a different approach” is needed.

The Africa Hub is an initiative of the EFM, in cooperation with the World Cinema Fund, Berlinale Talents — and its sister program, Talents Durban — and the Berlinale Co-Production Market, with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office.

This year the hub is expanding its footprint in Gropius Park, with organizers adding pop-up offices to underscore their commitment to doing business during the event, which runs from Feb. 16-21.

“It’s easy to say it’s a gathering point for everyone interested in Africa,” Knol says, but “the real aim of the Africa Hub is to make space within the African market for sales, financing, distribution.”

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Along with dozens of independent producers, the hub will welcome a host of companies and institutions dedicated to growing the African film sector, including the Durban FilmMart, the Namibia Film Commission, the Burundi Film Center, Rwanda's Kwetu Film Institute, Afridocs, Docubox, Congo's Tosala Project, Kenya's Cultural Video Production, South Africa's Sisters Working in Film and Television, Canada's Hot Docs-Blue Ice Group, Cologne-based sales agent Rushlake Media, France-based urban music net Trace and the pan-African distribution network Diffa.

Daily presentations and panel discussions will be geared toward both industry insiders and those looking to get a foothold on the continent. Among the highlights will be an analysis of audience trends in the diverse but fragmented African film market; a spotlight on Africa and acquisitions; and a focus on the opportunities and challenges for international co-productions from the "global south."

Underscoring the long-standing commitment of German cultural institutions to African cinema, the World Cinema Fund will also outline its accomplishments since the 2016 introduction of WCF Africa, a program dedicated exclusively to filmmaking on the continent.

WCF head Vincenzo Bugno notes that the new initiative came out of a recognition that a growing number of ambitious African projects were applying for funding in recent years. "We understood the African film production landscape needs more support, and focused support," he says.

The WCF can tout such successes as "Felicité," by Franco-Senegalese helmer Alain Gomis, and "The Wound," by South Africa's John Trengove: two projects that made it to the foreign-language Oscar shortlist after being featured at last year's Berlinale. The Africa Hub will also host a conversation this week with the producers of "You Will Die at Twenty," a Sudan-Egypt-Qatar co-prod that's received WCF Africa support.

Though WCF funding has offered a lifeline to many cash-strapped African producers, Bugno stresses that the goal of the fund is "supporting the independence and the autonomy of African cinema."

Knol echoes that sentiment when discussing the Africa Hub, whose role he says isn't to "offer solutions" from Europe for the countless challenges facing African filmmakers. Instead, he sees it more as a short-term framework that can help to build and strengthen networks of producers, institutions and film festivals scattered across the continent.

"For me the Berlinale Africa Hub is not a platform that will grow and grow," with each sub-Saharan African nation hosting its own market stand," he says.

Ultimately, the innovative companies who are charting a path forward for African cinema "will be part of the general representation in the European Film Market."

"I'd be happy to say in a few years, 'We don't need an Africa Hub anymore.'"
<http://variety.com/2018/film/spotlight/africa-hub-grows-its-business-in-berlin-1202696470/>

Bill Murray documentary getting its premiere in Toronto

Have you ever heard a story about how Bill Murray randomly showed up somewhere and did something absolutely unbelievable for or with someone normal? Someone just like us?

It would be surprising if you hadn't. The award-winning 67-year-old actor, and his humorous, everyday antics are the stuff of legend, both on set and off.

"Bill Murray stories" have, in fact, emerged over the past few decades as a widespread internet meme, with hundreds of different wacky tales to be found on Reddit, Facebook, Tumblr, dedicated websites and anywhere else where people talk about celebrity encounters.

He's rumoured to have crashed bachelor parties and engagement photo shoots. Sometimes he's seen riding bikes through Walmart. One person claims that he stole french fries right out of their hand and whispered "no one will ever believe you."

They're all great stories, but are they true?

Director Tommy Avallone decided to sleuth it out for his forthcoming documentary, *Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man*, which will premiere for the first time outside the U.S. this spring at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

Avallone's is one of the 15 films announced this morning by Hot Docs as part of its Special Presentations program – an elite tier of the festival that features high-profile premieres, award winners, works by masters or docs with star subjects.

Specific dates for the screenings of these films have yet to be released, but the festival itself runs from April 26 until May 6.

Here's what you can expect to see on the Special Presentations program this year so far:

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

Mr. Rogers created a neighbourhood in which he connected with children through honesty, directness and love, while delicately introducing complex social issues. His work continues to resonate today, but have we failed to become the neighbours he hoped for?

Amal

Filmed over six turbulent years following the Tahrir Square uprising in Egypt, a feisty 14-year-old activist grows before our eyes into a commanding young woman, searching for her identity in a tinderbox of political turmoil and patriarchal systems.

Anote's Ark

As rising sea levels threaten to swallow the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati, its president races against the clock to secure the future of a population doomed to be among the world's first climate change refugees.

Constructing Albert

In the high-stakes world of haute cuisine, legendary Catalan restaurant elBulli casts a long shadow—but when it closes, the head chef's younger brother draws on his long-unrecognized creative genius to fight for his own culinary vision.

Playing Hard

A powerhouse Montreal game studio finally greenlights its next potential blockbuster, but egos and artistry collide with the bottom line as everything rides on the epic battle game-featuring samurais, knights and Vikings—hitting the jackpot.

BlogTO – February 2018 (3 of 4)

Believer

Imagine Dragons frontman and devout Mormon Dan Reynolds struggles to reconcile his faith with his church's hardening stance on homosexuality, and finds himself on a mission to combat growing suicide rates among Utah's LGBTQ youth. Produced by Live Nation Productions.

Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man

"Bill Murray crashed my karaoke party." "Bill Murray photobombed our engagement pictures." Everyone knows someone with a "Bill Murray" story, but this inspirational and drop-dead-funny detective doc hunts down the myths and the man.

Three Identical Strangers

In 1980 in New York, three teenagers discover by chance that they're triplets who were separated at birth. Despite disparate upbringings, they enjoy their newfound fraternity and fame until relationships unravel under the dark mystery surrounding their adoptions.

The Devil We Know

Citizen activists unravel one of the largest environmental scandals of our time when West Virginian residents discover DuPont has been dumping a toxic chemical into the water supply—one that's now found in the blood of over 99% of the world's population.

Inventing Tomorrow

Roused by the issues faced by their own communities, brilliant young minds from around the globe gather in Los Angeles for the world's largest high school science fair, tackling environmental crises with ingenuity, inspiration and hope.

BlogTO – February 2018 (4 of 4)

The Cleaners

Dive into the shadowy world of internet content moderators, where fingers hovering over the delete key judge within seconds the lines between art and pornography, journalism and propaganda, censorship and free speech—with far-reaching consequences both online and off.

Chef Flynn

When a 10-year-old prodigy launches a restaurant in his parents' house, his culinary creations lead to collaborations with some of the world's best chefs and a New York Times Magazine cover. But with his career set to take off, can he handle the heat?

Love, Gilda

The vulnerable and effusive spirit of beloved comedian Gilda Radner is brought to life through newly discovered audio recordings, home movies, interviews with friends and diary entries read by performers she's inspired, including Melissa McCarthy, Amy Poehler and Maya Rudolph.

On Her Shoulders

After surviving enslavement and genocide, a resilient young Yazidi woman is thrust onto the international stage as a spokesperson for those who've suffered at the hands of ISIS, where she must learn to navigate bureaucracy, fame and good intentions.

The Oslo Diaries

Once upon a time, Israel and Palestine almost made peace. Personal diaries and never-before-seen archival footage bring raw emotion and new insights to the secret, complex negotiations—and eventual failure—of the Oslo Accords peace process.

The complete Special Presentations program and the full selection of films to screen at Hot

Docs 2018 will be announced on March 20.

<https://www.blogto.com/film/2018/02/bill-murray-documentary-premiere-toronto/>

Breaking Film and TV Industry News — February 28

More of this week's news for industry insiders.

Indiewire Staff

Feb 21, 2018 2:01 pm

Wednesday, February 28

- Samuel Goldwyn Films announced that the company has acquired North American rights to Xavier Gens' "Cold Skin." The film stars Ray Stevenson, David Oakes, and Aura Garrido. It is slated for an early June release.
- Mangurama has announced a deal for the North American theatrical release of Randall Wright's heart-warming documentary "Summer in the Forest." Abramorama, R2W Films, Rockhopper Films, and FilmWrights have partnered on the North American theatrical release of the film, opening in New York, on March 23 in honor of World Down Syndrome Day (March 21), and select cities nationwide thereafter.
- Netflix has acquired worldwide rights to Sandi Tan's "Shirkers," which had its world premiere at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, where Tan won the Directing Award in World Cinema Documentary. Netflix also acquired "Zion," a ten-minute film directed by Floyd Russ about a young wrestler who was born without legs and finds acceptance and community within the world of wrestling. Both films will launch globally on Netflix later this year.

Tuesday, February 27

- ABC has picked up the new one-hour talk show "Sundays With Alec Baldwin," featuring the titular star, and set a surprise sneak peak for the series following the Oscars on Sunday, March 4. Baldwin will interview Jerry Seinfeld and Kate McKinnon for this Sunday's special, which will be followed by eight additional episodes to premiere later this year.
- Factory 25 has announced that it has acquired world rights to the multiple festival award-winning "No Light and No Land Anywhere." Amber Sealey wrote, directed, and produced the film with Executive Producer Miranda July, rounding out a female-centric team that included producers Alysa Nahmias and Drea Clark and a cast and crew that is 85% women. Factory 25 will premiere the film theatrically on March 16 in New York City at IFC Center and at Facets in Chicago on March 9.
- Apple has given a straight-to-series order for an untitled psychological thriller from M. Night Shyamalan and writer Tony Basgallop. Shyamalan will also direct the first episode of the half-hour, 10-episode original thriller. The project is created by Basgallop ("24," "To The Ends of the Earth"), who will write and executive produce the series.

IndieWire – February 21, 2018 (2 of 4)

– Denis Leary (“Rescue Me”) has joined the cast of TNT’s “Animal Kingdom” as the show enters its third season. Leary will play Billy, Deran’s (Jake Weary) drifter dad who Smurf (Ellen Barkin) kicked out years ago. The series, about a Southern California crime family, also stars Scott Speedman, Shawn Hatosy, Ben Robson, Finn Cole, Molly Gordon and Carolina Guerra.

– Netflix will premiere the comedy special “Steve Martin and Martin Short: An Evening You Will Forget For The Rest Of Your Life” later in 2018.

The special was taped at the Peace Center in Greenville, South Carolina during Short and Martin’s current national tour. According to Netflix, “it features new material presented in a variety of musical sketches and conversations about their iconic careers, most memorable encounters, and of course, their legendary lives in show-business and stand-up.”

Grammy Award-winning bluegrass band The Steep Canyon Rangers and jazz pianist Jeff Babko will handle music duties.

– Hot Docs has announced 15 documentary features that will screen in this year’s Special Presentations program. Special Presentations features a high-profile collection of world and international premieres, award winners from the recent international festival circuit and works by master filmmakers or featuring some star subjects. [Check out the newly announced titles here.](#)

Special Presentations will screen as part of the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, running April 26 – May 6. The complete Special Presentations program and the full selection of films to screen at Hot Docs 2018 will be announced on March 20 including the 2018 opening night film.

– Following the European Film Market in Berlin, Music Box Films announced today that it has acquired all U.S. rights to “The Apparition” (L’Apparition), written and directed by Xavier Giannoli, from Memento Films International.

– Producers Michael De Luca and Jennifer Todd have announced additional presenters for the 90th Oscars telecast. Hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, the Oscars will air live Sunday, March 4, on the ABC Television Network.

The additional presenters, including past Oscar winners and nominees, are Emily Blunt, Sandra Bullock, Dave Chappelle, Eugenio Derbez, Ansel Elgort, Jane Fonda, Jodie Foster, Eiza González, Ashley Judd, Nicole Kidman, Matthew McConaughey, Helen Mirren, Rita Moreno, Lupita Nyong’o and Christopher Walken.

Monday, February 26

– Faith Ford (“Corky Sherwood”), Joe Regalbuto (“Frank Fontana”) and Grant Shaud (“Miles Silverberg”) have signed on to reprise their original characters on “Murphy Brown” along side star Candice Bergen.

CBS has given a 13-episode, series production commitment to a current-day revival of the show, which originally aired from 1988-1998.

IndieWire – February 21, 2018 (3 of 4)

Comedy Central

– Comedy Central has renewed “Corporate” for a second season. The dark comedy airs Wednesdays at 10 p.m. ET, with the season finale airing on March 14. “It’s hard to understand why people relate so strongly to the comedic, existential crises of working for corporations, but who are we to argue?” said Comedy Central president Kent Alterman.

“Corporate” was created by Jake Weisman, Matt Ingebretson and Pat Bishop, as stars Weisman and Ingebretson as two Junior Executives-in-Training at Hampton DeVille, a “heartless, corporate hell-hole” led by CEO Christian DeVille (Lance Reddick) and his top lieutenants John and Kate (Adam Lustick and Anne Dudek).

Friday, February 23

– Syfy has revealed the official premiere date for Season 3 of “The Expanse”: Wednesday, April 11 at 9 p.m., along with a teaser trailer for the critically acclaimed sci-fi drama. Take a look below:

Thursday, February 22

– MTV has announced that actress, comedian, and New York Times bestselling author Tiffany Haddish will host the 2018 MTV Movie & TV Awards on Monday, June 18. The 2018 categories and nominees will be announced at a later date.

– Kate McKinnon will receive the CinemaCon Comedy Star of the Year Award on the evening of Thursday, April 26, at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace during the annual event.

– The Film Society of Lincoln Center and The Museum of Modern Art has announced the complete lineup for the 47th annual New Directors/New Films (ND/NF), March 28 – April 8. This year’s festival will introduce 25 features and 10 short films to New York audiences. The festival will open with Stephen Lovridge’s “Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.” and will close with RaMell Ross’s “Hale County This Morning, This Evening.” [You can see the full lineup right here.](#)

– Comedy Central has renewed “Drunk History” for a sixth season.

Wednesday, February 21

– NBC has renewed “Superstore” for a fourth season. The show is a solid performer for NBC, growing +6% versus one year ago in adults 18-49 (1.7 rating) and +3% in total viewers (5.195 million). The show was NBC’s No. 1 comedy across digital platforms in 2017.

America Ferrera, Ben Feldman, Colton Dunn, Nico Santos, Nichole Bloom, Mark McKinney, and Lauren Ash star in the show, which was created and written by Justin Spitzer.

– South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference and Festivals (March 9-18, 2018) has announced the addition of Keynote Nonny de la Peña, and more Featured Speakers to the programming lineup.

IndieWire – February 21, 2018 (4 of 4)

Featured Speakers announced today include “The Daily” host Michael Barbaro; “Black-ish” creator Kenya Barris; Blumhouse Productions Founder and CEO Jason Blum; New York Times foreign correspondent Rukmini Callimachi; “Ready Player One” author Ernest Cline; POLITICO chief Washington correspondent Edward-Isaac Dove; bestselling author and Together Rising founder and president Glennon Doyle; actress Dakota Fanning, “CBS This Morning” co-host Gayle King; President of Paramount TV & Digital Entertainment Amy Powell; music legend Nile Rodgers; Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders; actor and former Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger; CNN anchor and chief Washington correspondent Jake Tapper; rapper and founding Wu-Tang Clan member U-GOD; Ireland’s Taoiseach Leo Varadkar T.D.; and many more.

Explore the full list of previously-announced [Featured Speakers](#), as well as the full list of Conference programming on the [online schedule](#).

– The newly formed Hamptons Arts Network (HAN) announces THAW FEST, a Hamptons-wide, weekend festival to celebrate spring, and promote the broadly diverse range of cultural programs and institutions that make the South Fork of Long Island unique. Hamptons Arts Network (HAN) is a newly formed 19-member consortium of not-for-profit organizations working together to create a unified arts community in the Hamptons. The goal is to promote collaboration, partnerships, and shared programming among its members, and to advocate for the arts in the areas of economic development, tourism, and education. HAN will create events to shine a light on the year-round cultural mecca located on Long Islands East End.

THAW FEST (The Hamptons Arts Weekend Festival), will launch three days of exhibitions, theater performances, film, music, garden tours, workshops, community engagement and family-focused events.

Tuesday, February 20

– The Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan has announced its official lineup of feature films for the 10th Annual ReelAbilities Film Festival: New York. The 2018 festival will take place March 8–14 at the JCC and more than 30 other venues across all five boroughs of New York City, as well as on Long Island and in Westchester and Rockland counties, making it the most geographically accessible festival in the country. Utilizing various technologies, the festival strives to offer the most accessible programs for those with special needs of all kinds. For the first time, the festival will offer Audio Description for all its feature films.

Check out the [full lineup and how to purchase tickets right here](#), plus see the festival’s newest trailer below.

Five Black films (other than Black Panther) to watch this week

Because the diaspora is wider than Wakanda

BY **CHRIS RATTAN**

FEBRUARY 23, 2018

2:38 PM



Credit: Brendan Adam- Zwelling

Brown Girl Begins' Ti-Jeanne (Mouna Traoré) and Gracie (Hannah Chantée).

I haven't watched **Black Panther**, and I've had it up to here with people assuming that I will. To be sure, I will. But not for the reason I suspect many people have in mind. I'm an admirer of director **Ryan Coogler**'s previous films, *Fruitvale Station* and **Creed**. I'm a sci-fi and fantasy fan with an interest in the Afrofuturist genre, and I'll watch anything that has the stately Danai Gurira in it.

But most of the strangers and varied acquaintances who ask if I've watched *Black Panther* yet, including my bagel guy who used it as a way to appease me after he got my order wrong, don't know this. What they do know is I'm Black and *Black Panther* features an all-Black cast. But here's the breaking news: that **doesn't mean that all Black people** are interested in watching it.

I noticed the same thing when **Get Out** and **Moonlight** were released: films I also watched for reasons I'd like to believe were more layered than just my ethnicity. Noticeably absent, however, were all the inquiries into why I wasn't rushing to the theatre to watch *La La Land*.

Black Panther marks an important moment for Black representation on film. But if you're Black and not planning to watch it right at this very moment, or if you're not Black and think

NOW Magazine – February 23, 2018 (2 of 3)

broadening your palette is generally a good idea, here are five films playing this week that chronicle the Black experience in equally important ways.

I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO

James Baldwin's spoken words provide the unflinching narrative for this BAFTA-winning **documentary** that explores the fight for civil rights against the pathology of racism in America. Much of the revered writer's insights are disturbingly relevant today.

*February 24 at Dufferin/St. Clair Library (1625 Dufferin), 2 pm, free. See **listing** for details.*

MUSIC ON FILM: MAMA AFRICA

Miriam Makeba was one of the first African musicians to achieve international success. She was also an outspoken anti-apartheid activist, who was forced into exile. This wide-ranging documentary draws on 50 years of performances and candid, behind-the-scenes footage to tell her story. Live music from South Sudanese singer/songwriter Ruth Mathiang and Waleed Abdulhamid follows the screening.

*February 27 at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema (506 Bloor W), 6:30 pm, \$17. See **listing** for details.*

6IX RISING: INSIDE THE WORLD OF RAP IN TORONTO

Drake and The Weeknd brought global attention to the city's hip-hop and R&B scenes. With all ears attuned to the 6ix, this documentary takes a close look at the burgeoning artists grinding for similar success. Featuring Big Lean, CMDWN, Friyie, Jazz Cartier, Pressa and Prime Boys.

*February 28 at Toronto Reference Library (789 Yonge), 6 pm, free. See **listing** for details.*

UNARMED VERSES

The youth at the heart of this **documentary** face forced relocation and the demolition of their neighborhood for yet another Toronto "revitalization" project. Nevertheless, their creativity and resilience persist as they participate in a community-based songwriting and recording program. Director **Charles Officer** will be on hand for a Q+A following the screening.

*February 28 at Innis Town Hall (2 Sussex), 7 pm, free with RSVP. See **listing** for details.*

NOW Magazine – February 23, 2018 (3 of 3)

BROWN GIRL BEGINS

Ti-Jeanne is the reluctant heroine of this post-apocalyptic tale about a young woman who must embrace her otherworldly powers to save her people from a ruthless drug lord. It took **director Sharon Lewis fifteen years** to bring her vision to the screen, adapting the iconic afrofuturist novel *Brown Girl in the Ring* by Nalo Hopkinson. The February 24 gala premiere at the AGO is sold out but the film will get a run at the Cineplex.

*Starts March 2 at Cineplex Cinemas Yonge-Dundas (10 Dundas E), various times. See **website** for details.*

Hot Docs '18 reveals Special Presentations program

By Daniele Alcinii
February 27, 2018



Morgan Neville's profile of iconic children's entertainer Mr. Rogers and Tommy Avallone's Bill Murray doc are among the 15 features slated to screen as part of the Special Presentations program for Hot Docs 2018.

The program features a collection of world and international premieres, award winners from the international festival circuit and "works by master filmmakers or featuring some star subjects."

Notable projects heading to the Toronto-set festival include Neville's *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* (pictured), which provides an intimate portrait of Fred Rogers; Avallone's *Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man*, an investigative doc in search of the acclaimed actor; **Lisa D'Apolito's Tribeca-opening** documentary *Love, Gilda* about the late, legendary comedian Gilda Radner; and Don Argott's *Believer*, which follows Imagine Dragons frontman Dan Reynolds as he struggles with his faith.

Also included in the program is Jean-Simon Chartier's world premiering feature *Playing Hard*. The 90-minute project documents a Montreal game studio's efforts to roll out a potential battle blockbuster while navigating internal and industry strife.

The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6.

Realscreen – February 27, 2018 (2 of 5)

The complete Special Presentations program and the full selection of films to screen at Hot Docs will be announced on March 20, including the 2018 opening night film.

Special Presentation titles appear below, with descriptions provided by Hot Docs:

Amal

D: Mohamed Siam | Lebanon, Egypt, France, Germany, Norway, Denmark | 2017 | 83 min
| North American Premiere

Filmed over six turbulent years following the Tahrir Square uprising in Egypt, a feisty 14-year-old activist grows before our eyes into a commanding young woman, searching for her identity in a tinderbox of political turmoil and patriarchal systems.

Anote's Ark

D: Matthieu Rytz | Canada | 2018 | 77 min | Canadian Premiere

As rising sea levels threaten to swallow the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati, its president races against the clock to secure the future of a population doomed to be among the world's first climate change refugees.

Believer

D: Don Argott | USA | 2017 | 101 min | Canadian Premiere

Imagine Dragons frontman and devout Mormon Dan Reynolds struggles to reconcile his faith with his church's hardening stance on homosexuality, and finds himself on a mission to combat growing suicide rates among Utah's LGBTQ youth. Produced by Live Nation Productions.

Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man

D: Tommy Avallone | USA | 2018 | 70 min | International Premiere

"Bill Murray crashed my karaoke party." "Bill Murray photobombed our engagement pictures." Everyone knows someone with a "Bill Murray" story, but this inspirational and drop-dead-funny detective doc hunts down the myths and the man.

Realscreen – February 27, 2018 (3 of 5)

Chef Flynn

D: Cameron Yates | USA | 2018 | 83 min | Canadian Premiere

When a 10-year-old prodigy launches a restaurant in his parents' house, his culinary creations lead to collaborations with some of the world's best chefs and a *New York Times Magazine* cover. But with his career set to take off, can he handle the heat?

The Cleaners

D: Hans Block, Moritz Rieseewieck | Germany, Brazil | 2018 | 88 min | Canadian Premiere

Dive into the shadowy world of internet content moderators, where fingers hovering over the delete key judge within seconds the lines between art and pornography, journalism and propaganda, censorship and free speech—with far-reaching consequences both online and off.

Constructing Albert

D: Laura Collado, Jim Loomis | Spain, Estonia | 2017 | 82 min | Canadian Premiere

In the high-stakes world of haute cuisine, legendary Catalan restaurant elBulli casts a long shadow—but when it closes, the head chef's younger brother draws on his long-unrecognized creative genius to fight for his own culinary vision.

The Devil We Know

D: Stephanie Soechtig | USA | 2018 | 88 min | International Premiere

Citizen activists unravel one of the largest environmental scandals of our time when West Virginian residents discover DuPont has been dumping a toxic chemical into the water supply—one that's now found in the blood of over 99% of the world's population.

Inventing Tomorrow

D: Laura Nix | USA | 2018 | 105 min | Canadian Premiere

Roused by the issues faced by their own communities, brilliant young minds from around the globe gather in Los Angeles for the world's largest high school science fair, tackling environmental crises with ingenuity, inspiration and hope.

Love, Gilda

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After surviving enslavement and genocide, a resilient young Yazidi woman is thrust onto the international stage as a spokesperson for those who've suffered at the hands of ISIS, where she must learn to navigate bureaucracy, fame and good intentions.

The Oslo Diaries

D: Mor Loushy, Daniel Sivan | Canada, Israel | 2018 | 98 min | Canadian Premiere

Once upon a time, Israel and Palestine almost made peace. Personal diaries and never-before-seen archival footage bring raw emotion and new insights to the secret, complex negotiations—and eventual failure—of the Oslo Accords peace process.

Playing Hard

D: Jean-Simon Chartier | Canada, USA | 2018 | 90 min | World Premiere

A powerhouse Montreal game studio finally greenlights its next potential blockbuster, but egos and artistry collide with the bottom line as everything rides on the epic battle game—featuring samurais, knights and Vikings—hitting the jackpot.

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D: Tim Wardle | USA | 2018 | 96 min | Canadian Premiere

Realscreen – February 27, 2018 (5 of 5)

In 1980 in New York, three teenagers discover by chance that they're triplets who were separated at birth. Despite disparate upbringings, they enjoy their newfound fraternity and fame until relationships unravel under the dark mystery surrounding their adoptions.

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

D: Morgan Neville | USA | 2018 | 93 min | International Premiere

Mr. Rogers created a neighbourhood in which he connected with children through honesty, directness and love, while delicately introducing complex social issues. His work continues to resonate today, but have we failed to become the neighbours he hoped for?

Hot Docs '18: Playing Hard to world premiere

EyeSteelFilm's *Anote's Ark* (pictured) and Israel-Canada copro *The Oslo Diaries* have also been selected for the fest's Special Presentations program.

By Daniele Alcinii
February 27, 2018



Jean-Simon Chartier's *Playing Hard* is among the 15 features slated to screen as part of the Special Presentations program at Hot Docs 2018.

The program features a collection of world and international premieres, award winners from the international festival circuit and "works by master filmmakers or featuring some star subjects."

Playing Hard will have its world premiere at the Toronto festival. Produced by Montreal's MC2, the 90-minute film documents a Montreal game studio's efforts to roll out a potential blockbuster while navigating internal and industry strife.

Also headed to the fest are EyeSteelFilm's *Anote's Ark* (pictured), which **premiered at Sundance**.

Directed by Mathieu Rytz, the film documents the crisis faced by the low-lying nation of Kiribati, which is in danger of disappearing in the coming decades due to rising sea levels.

Meanwhile, Israel/Canada copro *The Oslo Diaries*, which also debuted at Sundance, will have its Canadian premiere at Hot Docs. The film, by Hilla Medalia from Israel's Medalia Productions' and Ina Fichman from Montreal-based Intuitive Pictures, details the secret peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians held in Norway's capital in 1992. HBO recently **picked up** U.S. linear and streaming rights to the doc, which will air in Canada on CBC's documentary Channel.

Other notable projects heading to the Toronto-set festival include Morgan Neville's *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, which provides an intimate portrait of Fred Rogers; Tommy Avallone's *Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man*, an investigative doc in search of the acclaimed actor; Lisa D'Apolito's Tribeca-opening documentary *Love, Gilda*, about the late, legendary comedian Gilda Radner; and Don Argott's *Believer*, which follows Imagine Dragons frontman Dan Reynolds as he struggles with his faith.

The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6.

The complete Special Presentations program and the full selection of films to screen at Hot Docs will be announced on March 20, including the 2018 opening night film.

From Realscreen

<http://playbackonline.ca/2018/02/27/hot-docs-18-reveals-special-presentations-program/>

Mr. Will Wong – February 27, 2018 (1 of 3)

#FIRSTLOOK: 2018 HOT DOCS CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

February 27, 2018



The *2018 HOT DOCS CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL* is shaping-up to be an exciting one with the announcement of their Special Presentations! Running **April 26 to May 6**, tickets for the Festival go on sale to the public **March 20, 2018**.

Special Presentations include:

Amal

D: Mohamed Siam | Lebanon, Egypt, France, Germany, Norway, Denmark | 2017 | 83 min | North American Premiere

Filmed over six turbulent years following the Tahrir Square uprising in Egypt, a feisty 14-year-old activist grows before our eyes into a commanding young woman, searching for her identity in a tinderbox of political turmoil and patriarchal systems.

Anote's Ark

D: Matthieu Rytz | Canada | 2018 | 77 min | Canadian Premiere

As rising sea levels threaten to swallow the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati, its president races against the clock to secure the future of a population doomed to be among the world's first climate change refugees.

Believer

D: Don Argott | USA | 2017 | 101 min | Canadian Premiere

Imagine Dragons frontman and devout Mormon Dan Reynolds struggles to reconcile his faith with his church's hardening stance on homosexuality, and finds himself on a mission to combat growing suicide rates among Utah's LGBTQ youth. Produced by Live Nation Productions.

Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man

D: Tommy Avallone | USA | 2018 | 70 min | International Premiere

"Bill Murray crashed my karaoke party." "Bill Murray photobombed our engagement pictures." Everyone knows someone with a "Bill Murray" story, but this inspirational and drop-dead-funny detective doc hunts down the myths and the man.

Mr. Will Wong – February 27, 2018 (2 of 3)

Chef Flynn

D: Cameron Yates | USA | 2018 | 83 min | Canadian Premiere

When a 10-year-old prodigy launches a restaurant in his parents' house, his culinary creations lead to collaborations with some of the world's best chefs and a New York Times Magazine cover. But with his career set to take off, can he handle the heat?

The Cleaners

D: Hans Block, Moritz Rieseewieck | Germany, Brazil | 2018 | 88 min | Canadian Premiere

Dive into the shadowy world of internet content moderators, where fingers hovering over the delete key judge within seconds the lines between art and pornography, journalism and propaganda, censorship and free speech—with far-reaching consequences both online and off.

Constructing Albert

D: Laura Collado, Jim Loomis | Spain, Estonia | 2017 | 82 min | Canadian Premiere

In the high-stakes world of haute cuisine, legendary Catalan restaurant elBulli casts a long shadow—but when it closes, the head chef's younger brother draws on his long-unrecognized creative genius to fight for his own culinary vision.

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Films about Bill Murray, Gilda Radner and Mr. Rogers coming to Hot Docs fest

Award-winners and buzz-generators from elsewhere are coming to Toronto's Hot Docs Film Festival, which runs April 26-May 6.



Bill Murray and the late Gilda Radner, seen in their recurring "nerds" sketch on Saturday Night Live in the 1970s, each have a film about them coming to the 2018 Hot Docs Film Festival. (ALAN SINGER/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK)

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic
Tues., Feb. 27, 2018

Films about comedians Bill Murray and Gilda Radner and the neighbourly Mr. Rogers are among 15 Special Presentations selections announced for the 2018 Hot Docs festival, April 26-May 6.

Murray and the late Radner, close friends in real life, played antagonistic nerds Lisa Loopner and Todd DiLaMuca in a regular sketch during their *Saturday Night Live* heyday in the 1970s.

Hot Docs will screen separate movies about them: Tommy Avallone's *Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man*, which is described as an "inspirational and drop-dead-funny detective doc"; and Lisa D'Apolito's *Love, Gilda*, a documentary biopic that includes newly found audiotape and home movies along with celebrity remembrances about the *SNL* funnywoman, who died of cancer in 1989.

Straight from its Sundance 2018 debut is Morgan Neville's *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, a doc about beloved children's entertainer Fred Rogers, who died in 2003, and whose *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* educational TV delighted and instructed two generations of tots and pre-teens. (A dramatic movie about Rogers' life, starring Tom Hanks as the PBS host, is in the works, too.)

Hot Docs will also host the local premieres of two Sundance prizewinners: Alexandria Bombach's *On Her Shoulders*, the story (which took the U.S. Documentary Directing Award) of an ISIS terror survivor who became a human-rights activist; and Tim Wardle's *Three Identical Strangers*, the strange-but-true story of three triplets, separated at birth, who discover their family ties as teenagers, which won Sundance's U.S. Documentary Special Jury Award.

Toronto Star – February 27, 2018 (2 of 2)

Two Canadian films that premiered at Sundance 2018 are also coming to Hot Docs: Matthieu Rytz's *Anote's Ark*, which documents the quest of the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati to escape drowning caused by climate-changed rising waves; and Mor Loushy's and Daniel Sivan's *The Oslo Diaries*, the previously untold story of a secret quest to broker a lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace deal in the early 1990s.

Details on these and other Hot Docs announcements are available at www.hotdocs.com.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/02/27/films-about-bill-murray-gilda-radner-and-mr-rogers-coming-to-hot-docs-fest.html>

Nerds and a neighbour coming to Hot Docs

Films about Bill Murray, Gilda Radner and Mr. Rogers coming to the movie festival

Opinion Feb 28, 2018 by Peter Howell Toronto Star



Bill Murray and Gilda Radner played nerdy friends Todd and Lisa in a recurring sketch on Saturday Night Live in the 1970s. Murray and Radner each have a film about them coming to the 2018 Hot Docs Film Festival. - Alan Singer/NBC/NBCU Photo Bank

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This film tells the previously untold story of a secret quest to broker a lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace deal in the early 1990s. Details on these and other Hot Docs announcements are available at hotdocs.com. *Toronto Star* <https://www.thespec.com/opinion-story/8290381-nerds-and-a-neighbour-coming-to-hot-docs/>

The Washington Post's Marty Baron on tracking Trump and newsroom diversity

STEVEN SENNE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SIMON HOUPT

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 28, 2018UPDATED FEBRUARY 28, 2018

Marty Baron is not naturally a creature of the spotlight. But ever since the 2015 release of *Spotlight*, the Oscar-winning drama about The Boston Globe's 2001 investigation into the Catholic Church's child sexual-abuse scandal that he oversaw while editor of that newspaper, he has grown more comfortable in his role as a public figure. Now, as executive editor of The Washington Post, which he joined in 2012, Baron shepherds a newsroom of 750 that has helped prove, with its run of monster scoops on the Trump White House, that there may be a successful modern business model in compelling journalism. On Saturday, he will be in conversation with Globe and Mail editor-in-chief David Walmsley as part of the Hot Docs Curious Minds Weekend in Toronto.

I didn't want to start with Donald Trump, but about an hour ago, Drudge tweeted: 'Trump set for shock announcement!' Do you ever feel your phone buzz and think, 'Oh, God, what has Trump done now?'

I don't look at it that way. I don't follow him on Twitter –

Really? Why not?

Because we have staff who do that, and I figure that if he says something consequential, I'll get a notification – our own notification or another news organization. I don't need to follow him.

Twitter aside, is it sometimes enervating to follow the twists and turns of this President?

Ah, that's not sort of the way I view it. I think we've become accustomed to the idea that he's going to do seemingly surprising things. So as a result, they're no longer surprising.

Your fact-checkers have determined that Trump made more than 2,000 false or misleading statements in his first year in office. How do you avoid the perception that the Post is out to sink him, when you track his – what we would call lies – so fervently?

We haven't called them lies, first of all. We've called them falsehoods and misleading statements. Our objective here at the Post is to be an independent news organization. During the course of the election campaign, we provided very aggressive coverage of Hillary Clinton. We also did the same on Bernie Sanders. If the President is making statements that are untrue or misleading, we have an obligation to tell the public that. Now, if the public comes away from that saying that we're trying to sink the President, I don't know that there's very much that I can do about that, other than to make sure that our reporting, overall, over time, is fair and honest and honourable and independent. And the public will come away with whatever impression they come away with. But I don't think that it's a smart exercise for me or anyone else who works here to be taking the measure of public opinion of us at every moment.

The Globe and Mail – February 28, 2018 (2 of 3)

One measure you do consider is traffic. In the fall of 2015, you had about 67 million unique monthly visitors. What are the numbers now?

In January, we were at 91 million unique visitors. The New York Times was 92 million, something like that. That's U.S. visitors.

You've shifted lately to a focus on subscriptions. How do you stop your staff from rolling their eyes when the goalposts keep changing?

I roll my eyes, too. But I'm actually pleased with the shift toward subscriptions. All of us should be, because that means we can do more of the kind of journalism that we think is most valuable. The public is drawn to investigative work. They're drawn to great narratives. They're drawn to deep, explanatory pieces. They're drawn to more thoughtful journalism, more comprehensive journalism. That's what we have always wanted to do, and so I think it's a real plus that now the business model has shifted to subscriptions rather than just generating lots of traffic.

How important is diversity for your newsroom?

It's something we pay a lot of attention to. It's diversity in terms of things like gender and race and ethnicity, but also experience. You know, this country has been at war for many years now, yet there are very few veterans who work in our newsroom. Sadly, perhaps, that's just part of the American experience, and if we really want to understand what Americans are thinking about, and really understand Americans as we should, then we should probably have more veterans in our newsroom.

Ideological diversity, too?

Every kind of diversity, we're interested in.

You – or at least a character based on you – were already in an Oscar-winning film. And now your paper is in another film that's up for an Oscar this weekend. So, which is better: *Spotlight* or *The Post*?

Hah. I am not going to answer that question.

Okay, fine. Will you be rooting for *The Post* to win best picture on Sunday?

That would be wonderful. Yeah. Sure. Of course.

Jeez, why do you hate *Lady Bird*?

I haven't seen *Lady Bird* yet.

Do you get out much? Do you even see movies?

Occasionally. I'm not a regular moviegoer, but yeah, I saw one this past weekend.

The Globe and Mail – February 28, 2018 (3 of 3)

Which one?

Phantom Thread.

And what did you think?

Ahhh – I'm not going to say. I'll leave that to the critics.

This interview has been condensed and edited.

Marty Baron: The Fourth Estate in the Age of Trump is on March 3 at 3:30 p.m. at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in Toronto (hotdocscinema.ca).

Where to watch the 2018 Oscars in Toronto

Where will you be when Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway mess up again?

BY **MICHELLE DA SILVA**

MARCH 2, 2018

4:35 PM

The 90th annual Academy Awards takes place Sunday (March 4), which means it's time to bug your few remaining friends with cable TV to invite you over. If you'd rather not watch the red carpet and Oscars ceremony on the small screen (or you're avoiding your friends), here's a list of places hosting viewing parties. Many of them have Oscar pool prizes, so check out our **Oscar 2018 predictions** before you go.

Oscar's Viewing Party at the Gladstone Hotel

The free party at the Gladstone is hosted by Nicole Stamp and Kaleb Robertson and goes from 7:30 to 11 pm. The 19+ event takes place in the Melody Bar. See **website** for details.

The Oscars at Comedy Bar

Watch the awards on the big screen while comedians including Paul Beer, Allison Davey, Mark Little, Aine Davis, Richard Sibblies, Roger Bainbridge and Andrew Johnston offer live commentary. The event is free and starts at 7 pm. See **listing** for details.

The Oscars Live at the Revue

Watch a live broadcast of the awards on the Revue Cinema's big screen. The free event includes trivia, prizes and champagne. See **listing** for details.

Oscars Live Broadcast and Commentary at Hot Docs

Join Globe And Mail film columnists as well as Danita Steinberg and Emily Gagne, host of Toronto's **What About Meryl podcast**, for a viewing of the Oscars with discussion and commentary. The free screening is sold out; however, admission is still available to those with

NOW Magazine – March 2, 2018 (2 of 2)

Curious Minds weekend passes or tickets to the Hot Docs Oscars Red Carpet Reception. See [website](#) for details.

Screen Queens Does the Oscars: Live at The Royal

Put on your red carpet best for what might be the queerest Oscar party in town. Hosted by drag queen Allysia Chaynes with special guest panelists Sarah-Tai Black, Coco Framboise and Fay Slift, the free party at the Royal Cinema promises booze, R-rated commentary and prizes.

Doors open at 6 pm. See [website](#) for details.

90th annual Academy Awards Viewing Party at TIFF

Enjoy the Oscars with other cinephiles at the party in the TIFF Bell Lightbox's Bell Blue Room Members' Lounge. There will be specialty cocktails, snacks and a themed buffet. Admission is free but cocktails are \$7 and the buffet is \$35. See [website](#) for details.

The best events in Toronto this weekend: March 2-4

Our top picks for art, music, film, comedy and more

BY **NOW STAFF**

MARCH 2, 2018

12:30 PM

YAYOI KUSAMA: INFINITY MIRRORS

The world's top-selling living female artist's blockbuster show has sold out at three American - museums, and based on the online rush when advance tickets went on sale, it's already wildly popular with Torontonians. The main attraction is the Japanese artist's mirror rooms, which - visitors will be able to experience (read: snap selfies) for 20 to 30 seconds at time. In fact, the show has become such a social media phenomenon, one Washington, DC, couple staged a - marriage proposal in Kusama's The Soul Of Millions Of Light Years Away room last spring.

March 3 to May 27. Art Gallery of Ontario. 317 Dundas West. \$21.50-\$30. ago.ca.

Curious Minds

Talks by Tina Brown, John Hodgman, Reza Aslan and others.

March 2. \$29-\$39, pass \$149. Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. hotdocscinema.ca.

Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival

Scripted, ensemble comedy fest takes over the Theatre Centre & Comedy Bar.

To March 11. \$16-\$20, pass \$90. torontosketchfest.com. See [round-up of five must-see shows](#).

Phantom Thread in 70mm

Here are **five reasons** you need to see Paul Thomas Anderson's Oscar-nominated romance as it was meant to be seen.

NOW Magazine – March 2, 2018 (2 of 2)

Opens March 2. TIFF Bell Lightbox. tiff.net.

International Women's Day March

Liberation-themed rally and march.

March 3. 11 am at OISE Auditorium; march starts at 1 pm. Free. iwdtoronto.ca.

My Dad Wrote A Porno

Jamie Morton reads his dad's erotica as part of live podcast taping.

March 4. Massey Hall. 8 pm. \$45-\$59.50. masseyhall.com.

Hot Docs Donates 25 Years of Festival History to Ryerson Archives

Posted on March 6th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Last Train Home a 2010 Hot Docs selection and Kinosmith title
Photo courtesy Kinosmith

25 years of Hot Docs history has found a home. Canada's international documentary festival donated a significant collection of Hot Docs materials to the Ryerson University Library and Archives. The catalogue of assets includes print materials such as programming guides, press kits, posters, creative materials, EPKs, media clippings, and promotional stills from documentaries that screened at Hot Docs in the first 25 years of the festival. The contribution also features 70 DVDs from the KinoSmith Hot Docs Collection.

"Documentary film offers a unique, first-hand perspective into understanding the lives and experiences of others, and as such it's important to study the art form to learn effective ways of telling these vital stories," said Brett Hendrie, executive director of Hot Docs, in a statement from the festival. "With 25 years of history, it was imperative for us to make Hot Docs' archival records available to students, as they provide a window into new creative and media landscapes used in documentary filmmaking."

"There couldn't be a better fit between an academic institution and a film organization," added Marc Glassman, *POV* editor and adjunct professor, Ryerson University. "With its unique Master of Fine Arts in Documentary Media program, Ryerson is the perfect place to house a collection of documentary DVDs, film catalogues and ephemera from Hot Docs, the most successful film festival of its kind in North America."

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – March 6, 2018 (1 of 2)

The collection offers a valuable resource for Ryerson students, faculty, and researchers to explore the growth of Canadian and international documentary across the past quarter century. Ryerson is one of Canada's leading institutions for film studies, photography, and image arts. The university houses the Documentary Media Research Centre, which makes it the ideal house for the collection in Toronto. Many graduates of the Masters programme have gone to debut their films at Hot Docs, including Ali Weinstein (*Mermaids*), Lisa Rideout (*Take a Walk on the Wild Side*), and Jason O'Hara (*State of Exception*) at the festival last year.

This year's Hot Docs festival runs April 26 to May 6. 2018 marks the 25th anniversary of the festival.

Hot Docs donates 25 years of festival history to Ryerson

University Library and Archives to house film catalogues and ephemera for students and researchers

March 06, 2018

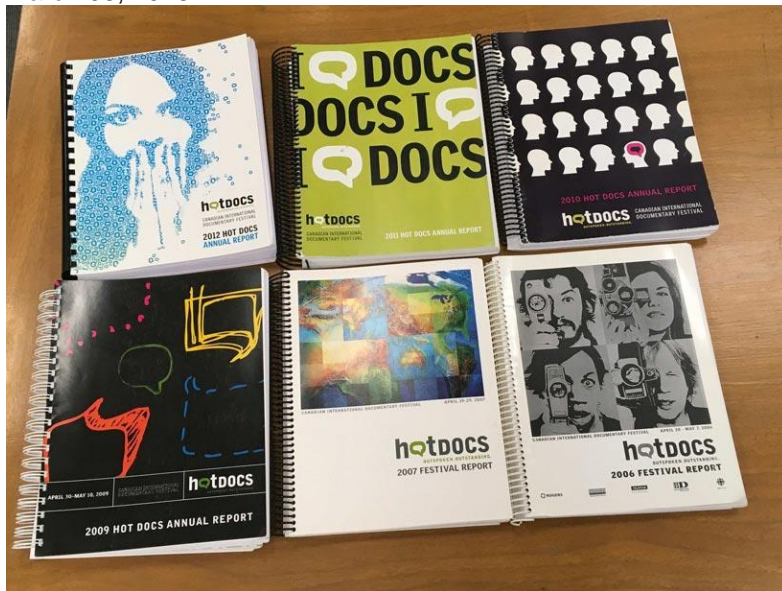


Photo: A selection of annual reports from Hot Docs are part of the donation of archival material to Ryerson University Library and Archives.

To mark its 25th Festival anniversary this spring, [Hot Docs, external link](#) has made a significant donation to the Ryerson University Library and Archives. The gift includes decades-worth of assets from past Hot Docs Festivals and year-round activities that will be housed in the Library's Special Collections, providing students the opportunity to reference the materials for their studies, and contributing to Ryerson University's comprehensive collection of archival material in media arts.

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Ryerson University is home to a number of media programs as well as the Documentary Media Research Centre, making it a natural repository for Hot Docs' extensive archival collection. Included in the donation are: copies of Festival and Hot Docs Cinema publications, such as annual reports, program guides, screening schedules, Hot Docs Forum catalogues and other industry guides; marketing materials including posters, handbills and creative properties; promotional film stills and EPKs from many of the thousands of films that have screened at the Festival; media clippings and publicity reports; and 70 DVDs from the KinoSmith Hot Docs Collection among other items.

Ryerson Today – March 6, 2018 (1 of 2)

“We are very pleased to receive the Hot Docs archival materials,” says Special Collections Librarian Alison Skyrme. “The collection will be of exceptional research value for film students, and offers a tremendous resource for all those who want to study and understand the creative industries in Canada.”

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Ryerson University’s Special Collections holds many rare, fragile, audiovisual and other non-book items, as well as materials that relate to specific research fields. It was established to help support learning and teaching needs, and facilitate the scholarly, research and creative activities of the Ryerson community by acquiring and preserving photography, film and cultural history objects.

Hot Docs, North America’s largest documentary festival, conference and market, will present its 25th annual event from April 26-May 6, 2018.

NFB Gender Parity Initiative on Target

Posted on March 6th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)

By Pat Mullen



Marie Clements on the shoot of NFB hit *The Road Forward*
Courtesy NFB

Forget 50/50! Women in the director's seat now outpace men at the National Film Board of Canada by nearly ten percent. Kate Taylor at *The Globe and Mail* reports that the NFB is on target for its goal to achieve gender parity in production by 2020. Taylor says that NFB figures attribute 47% of projects to female directors with projects directed by men clocking in at 38%. The number of projects directed by female-male teams is at 15% up from 5% the previous year. Taylor attributes the pairing of directors to the NFB's effort to groom more women for the director's seat.

The NFB has generally been leading the way on inclusion efforts with docs directed by women, including some significant films directed by Indigenous filmmakers and women of colour, making waves on the festival circuit. Recent hits include Alethea Arnaquq-Baril's *Angry Inuk*, Tiffany Hsiung's *The Apology*, Marie Clements' *The Road Forward*, Tasha Hubbard's *Birth of a Family*, Céline Baril's *24 Davids*, and Alanis Obomsawin's *Our People Will Be Healed*, while Attiya Khan and Larry Jackman's *A Better Man* was a festival talking point this past year. The films all drew significant acclaim and awards at festivals in Canada and worldwide. Upcoming projects by women include Samara Chadwick's *1999*, Laura Marie Wayne's *Love, Scott*, and NFB co-production *What Walaa Wants* by Christy Garland.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – March 6, 2018 (2 of 2)

By contrast, few if any of the feature documentaries pushed by the NFB are directed by men with only Charles Officer's *Unarmed Verses* and John Hopkins' *Bluefin* seeing much support or life on the festival circuit, while Jean-François Caissy's *First Stripes* recently played Berlin and is expected for Hot Docs. Short projects and VR works tend to have even parity when surveying the field of NFB titles and account for many mixed teams. Matthew Rankin's animated short *The Tesla World Light* drew raves from Cannes to TIFF and Jay Cardinal's *Holy Angels* was an audience favourite at fall festivals, along with women-directed shorts like Torill Kove's *Threads* and Chintis Lundgren's *Manivald* making waves.

The NFB released additional figures after giving Taylor the scoop, noting that 46% of the NFB's production budget went to projects by women. The numbers are certainly encouraging as peers push for change in the industry. There remains room for improvement with the NFB's study noting that women account for 38% of editors, 13% of cinematographers, and 4% of music credits on NFB projects

FILMMAKER LOOKING TO GET AT 'SUBSTANCE' OF ISRAEL CONFLICT

By **Jordan Adler**

March 8, 2018



Amos Gitai and a young Palestinian boy he interviews in his documentary *West of the Jordan River*.

For nearly four decades, Israeli filmmaker Amos Gitai has been celebrated internationally by cinephiles while provoking controversy in his native country. His documentaries and fiction films have both looked at the stalled peace process and Palestinian-Israeli relations.

Outside of the film festival circuit, Gitai's work rarely screens in North America, so Toronto audiences should make it a priority to head to the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, where his newest film, *West of the Jordan River*, will play for one week, beginning March 9.

Armed with a small crew, the director traverses borders in Israel and the Palestinian territories to meet with many citizens: journalists, activists, Knesset members, victims of terrorism.

The film also marks his first visit to the West Bank since making *Field Diary* in 1982. The partial censorship of that doc, shot during the Lebanon War, convinced Gitai to move to France.

However, he returned to Israel during Yitzhak Rabin's tenure as prime minister. In *West of the Jordan River*, we see clips of Gitai interviewing Rabin shortly before he was assassinated.

As the director says to the audience in archival footage from the mid-1990s, "I want to scratch layer after layer to get to the substance of the matter, to understand how we could possibly reach some reconciliation in the region."

The Canadian Jewish News – March 8, 2018 (2 of 3)

Accordingly, Gitai is interested in excavating similar answers from 2016, when this doc was made. Many of the sentiments he finds in the modern Middle East echo the mood from two decades earlier, although the director also finds sharply hostile tones – on both sides.

The clearest distinction between the eras comes when one compares Gitai's interview with Rabin to a more contemporary one with Tzipi Hotovely, Israel's deputy minister of foreign affairs.

The former calmly speaks of a will among certain Palestinian leaders to negotiate peace, while mentioning that other camps of resistance are too focused on violence. "But peace can be made with enemies," Rabin insists, "sometimes even the toughest enemies."

Hotovely, meanwhile, warns that "there's only radicalization" in Palestinian society.

Gitai's fascination with potential reconciliation is at its most palpable during scenes with non-violent activists, both Israeli and Palestinian.

One of those groups, Parents Circle Families Forum, is comprised of women from both sides who lost their children in the conflict but meet to partake in dialogue. (This initiative was one focus of the outstanding 2006 documentary *Encounter Point*.)

Another effort, B'Tselem, is made up of young women clutching video cameras as they try to capture instances of brutality and human rights violations in the West Bank.

At a meeting with these amateur filmmakers, Gitai watches with fascination as the women discuss filmmaking strategies. One of their tactics: using the zoom to keep themselves at a safe distance from aggression.

Audiences should be aware that Gitai is not out to make a film that pleases all sides of the political spectrum. He is quick to challenge right-wing politicians he interviews, and often finds

common ground with left-wing journalists – several of whom write for Israel's *Haaretz* newspaper.

The Canadian Jewish News – March 8, 2018 (3 of 3)

He even accompanies that publication's team of journalists into Hebron as they report on Palestinian affairs and non-Israeli points of view.

West of the Jordan River is explicitly left-leaning, although that does not overly hinder the value and urgency of its subject. Even though the film clocks in at under 90 minutes, Gitai manages to cover a wide number of major issues inciting discussion in the Middle East today.

Regardless, the film's brevity is also a problem. Considering the number of subjects who speak about West Bank settlements, one wishes Gitai had spent more time meeting with citizens directly affected by these issues. (There is one terrific sequence, though, set at a Bedouin school in the shadow of an Israeli settlement.)

However, the directness of Gitai's questions and the attention he gives to non-violent activists – groups whose aims are too rarely articulated onscreen – makes the documentary a must-see.

Hot Docs '18 adds to Special Presentations program

By Selina Chignall

March 13, 2018

Daniel J. Clark's *Behind the Curve* and Richard Rowley's *Blue Wall* are among the documentary features enjoying world premieres in the Hot Docs Special Presentations program.

On Tuesday morning (March 13), Hot Docs announced 17 additional doc features that will screen as part of the festival's Special Presentations program, which features a "high-profile collection of world and international premieres, award winners from the recent international festival circuit and works by master filmmakers or featuring some star subjects." Of the 17 docs screening, four are world premieres.

Behind the Curve looks at the rapid rise of those who believe the world is flat, while *Blue Wall* examines the police killing and cover up of Laquan McDonald. Elsewhere, directors Steve and Todd Jones' *Andy Irons: Kissed by God* looks at the life of surf champ Andy Irons, while Jack Bryan's espionage-focused *Active Measures* explores how Trump-Putin ties and Soviet-style information warfare tactics were used to affect the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

As previously announced, Hot Docs Special Presentations program also includes Morgan Neville's *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, centered on childhood entertainer Mr. Rogers, and Tommy Avallone's feature doc featuring legendary comedian Bill Murray. The complete Special Presentations program and the full selection of films to screen at Hot Docs 2018 will be announced on March 20, including the 2018 opening night film

The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival runs April 26 to May 6 in Toronto, Canada.

The additional 17 films in the Special Presentations section are listed below, with descriptions courtesy of Hot Docs:

Active Measures

D: Jack Bryan | P: Laura Dubois, Marley Clements | U.S. | 2018 | 112 min | World Premiere

Dive deep into one of the most deft espionage operations in history. Featuring exclusive interviews with Hillary Clinton, John McCain and more, this explosive film uncovers Trump-Putin ties dating back to the '70s and Soviet-style information warfare tactics used to affect the 2016 US presidential election.

Alt-Right: Age Of Rage

D: Adam Bhala Lough | P: Michael Karbelnikoff, Alex Needles | 2018 | U.S. | 104 min | Canadian Premiere

Trigger warning: everything. Set against the horrific violence of the 2017 Charlottesville riots, alt-right leader Richard Spencer squares off against antifa activist Daryle Lamont Jenkins in this provocative look inside the two movements boiling over in America.

Realscreen – March 13, 2018 (2 of 4)

Andy Irons: Kissed By God

D: Steve Jones, Todd Jones | P: Enich Harris | 2018 | U.S. | 100 min | World Premiere
Three-time world surfing champion Andy Irons chased perfect pipe on the waves but dark demons on shore. Breathtaking cinematography captures the gorgeously wild star, but as mental illness troubles the waters, a heartbreaking tragedy unfolds.

Behind The Curve

D: Daniel J. Clark | P: Caroline Clark, Nick Andert, Daniel J. Clark | 2018 | U.S. | 96 min | World Premiere

A rapidly rising number of people are convinced that the Earth is flat. Follow the leaders behind this conspiracy theory du jour as they rally to spread their message, challenge scientific proofs and flatten the globe once and for all.

Blue Wall

D: Richard Rowley | P: Jamie Kalven, Jacqueline Soohen | 2018 | U.S. | 76 min | World Premiere

Oscar-nominated director Richard Rowley offers a searing examination of the police killing of Laquan McDonald, tracing the conspiracy of silence that extended up to the Chicago mayor's office and revealing the journalists, activists and lawyers whose perseverance exposed the truth.

The Fourth Estate

D: Liz Garbus | P: Liz Garbus, Jenny Carchman, Justin Wilkes | 2018 | U.S. | International Premiere

Granted unprecedented access and interviews with editors and reporters on the front lines, Emmy®-winning and Oscar®-nominated filmmaker Liz Garbus' THE FOURTH ESTATE follows the inner workings of The New York Times, revealing the challenges, triumphs and pitfalls of covering a president who has declared war on the free press.

The Game Changers

D: Louie Psihoyos | P: Joseph Pace, James Wilks | 2018 | U.S., Canada | 88 min | Canadian Premiere

Oscar-winner Louie Psihoyos's (The Cove) explosive doc examines elite athletes' dramatically improved strength and performance when they switch from animal- to plant-based diets, and upends antiquated notions of masculinity and virility along the way.

Matangi / Maya / M.I.A.

D: Steve Loveridge | P: Lori Cheatle, Andrew Goldman, Paul Mezey | 2018 | U.S. | 97 min | Canadian Premiere

Two decades' worth of personal footage capture the complex evolution of M.I.A., the musician and social justice activist whose outspoken rhymes tore up the charts, stoked political fires and captivated fans and critics worldwide.

McQueen

D: Ian Bonhôte, Peter Ettedgui (co-director) | P: Ian Bonhôte, Andee Ryder, Nick Taussig, Paul Van Carter | 2018 | U.S. | 111 min | International Premiere

An intimate account of the life, career and artistry of legendary couturier, fashion maverick

Realscreen – March 13, 2018 (3 of 4)

and creative genius Alexander McQueen, vividly brought to life via rare archival footage and revealing interviews with his inner circle.

Mercury 13

D: David Sington, Heather Walsh | P: David Sington, Heather Walsh, Brendan Byrne, Trevor Birney, Geraldine Creed | 2018 | Ireland | 80 min | International Premiere
The pioneers enrolled in NASA's first female astronaut training program finally open up about their top-secret testing, which pitted them against the established boys' club of American astronauts of the 1950s.

More Human Than Human

D: Tommy Pallotta, Femke Wolting | P: Tommy Pallotta, Femke Wolting, Bruno Felix, Bart Van Langendonck | 2018 | Netherlands, U.S., Belgium | 79 min | International Premiere
With artificial intelligence potentially on track to surpass human capabilities within the next two decades, one filmmaker tests his own job security by building a robot to replace himself and discovers the truth of what's really at stake.

Mr. Soul!

D: Sam Pollard, Melissa Haizlip | P: Doug Blush, Melissa Haizlip | 2018 | U.S. | 102 min | International Premiere
Go backstage with the first all-Black variety show broadcast nationally on PBS, and meet its openly gay host, who was instrumental in ushering radical Black talent into American living rooms in the wake of the civil rights movement.

The Night Of All Nights

D: Yasemin Şamdereli | P: Anja-Karina Richter, Arne Birkenstock, Christian Becker | 2018 | Germany | 96 min | International Premiere
In frank and funny interviews, four couples from across the world, united under vastly different circumstances but each together for more than 50 years, reflect on their relationships and share their secrets for long-lasting love—for better or for worse.

Our New President

D: Maxim Pozdorovkin | P: Maxim Pozdorovkin, Joe Bender, Charlotte Cook | 2018 | U.S. | 77 min | Canadian Premiere
In a horrifying and hilarious collage, the story of Donald Trump's path to the presidency is told entirely through Russian propaganda, laying bare an empire of fake news and the cynical tactics of information warfare.

Pick Of The Litter

D: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy | P: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy | 2018 | U.S. | 79 min | International Premiere
A litter of newborn Labrador puppies begins "basic training" to become service dogs for the blind—but who will make the cut? Their successes and failures are shared equally with the devoted caretakers who guide them on this rigorous two-year journey.

Realscreen – March 13, 2018 (4 of 4)

Tiny Shoulders: Rethinking Barbie

D: Andrea Blaugrund Nevins | P: Cristan Crocker | 2018 | U.S. | 90 min | International Premiere

With sales at a historic low and women's rights campaigns at fever pitch, Barbie is getting a radical makeover. Gloria Steinem, Roxane Gay, Mattel designers and others renegotiate the iconic doll's place in a world that both loves and loves to hate her.

United Skates

D: Dyana Winkler, Tina Brown | P: Tina Brown, Dyana Winkler | 2018 | U.S. | 86 min | International Premiere

When America's last roller rinks are threatened with closure, thousands pull together to save and celebrate the vibrant underground subculture that has provided a safe space for the Black community since before the civil rights movement.

Hot Docs and Samsung Partner for Digi Docs

Posted on March 13th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)

By Pat Mullen



Gatekeeper, directed by Yung Chang

More plans for the 25th anniversary of Hot Docs! The festival announced today a partnership with Samsung Canada to commission six short films for this year's festival. The half dozen films will comprise the Big Steps series and combine traditional filmmaking with the latest in technological innovations. All six films will be shot on Samsung mobile devices—four on a Galaxy Note 8 and two on the Galaxy S9+—and will reflect a pivotal moment in the life of each filmmaker.

The series extends the mix of traditional and contemporary storytelling by splitting directorial duties between established pro filmmakers and digital “content creators.” The three veteran doc makers participating in the project are Yung Chang (*Up the Yangtze*, *Gatekeeper*), Nimisha Mukerji (65 _ *Redroses*, *Tempest Storm*) and Charles Officer (*Unarmed Verses*, *Mighty Jerome*). The trio of YouTubers consists of short filmmaker/actor *Emile Roy*, *NerdyAndQuirky* personality Sabrina Cruz, and *Buffer Festival* founder Corey Vidal.

“The remarkable growth of digital technology has made the art of filmmaking more accessible, encouraging people to play with and create high-quality footage on their handheld device,” said Brett Hendrie, executive director of Hot Docs, in a statement from the festival. “We’re extremely pleased to partner with Samsung Canada to showcase their latest smartphone’s cinematic features, and to promote the craft of storytelling through film with this new technology.” The first three short docs will premiere on March 23rd at the Eaton Centre in Toronto, while the remaining trio will premiere on April 27th. All six short docs will play as pre-show entertainment during the festival.

<http://povmagazine.com/blog/view/hot-docs-and-samsung-partner-for-digi-docs>

Alexander McQueen, M.I.A. films added to 2018 Hot Docs line-up

BY ADAM WEDDLE 13 MARCH 2018



Canadian documentary festival adds 17 special presentations

They include *McQueen*, Ian Bonhôte's documentary about fashion designer Alexander McQueen, and Steve Loveridge's *MATANGA / MAYA / M.I.A.* (pictured), the Sundance world premiere about British rapper and record producer M.I.A. that has been picked up for the UK by Dogwoof.

Other highlights in the programme include Liz Garbus's *The Fourth Estate*, a look into how *The New York Times* covered the first year of the Trump presidency, and *Mercury 13*, the story of NASA's first female astronaut training programme.

The full selection from Hot Docs, which runs from April 26-May 6 in Toronto, will be announced on March 20, including the remainder of the special presentation titles and the opening night film.

Full list of new special presentations

All synopses provided by Hot Docs.

SCREEN DAILY – March 13, 2018 (2 of 5)

ACTIVE MEASURES

Dir. Jack Bryan

Dive deep into one of the most deft espionage operations in history. Featuring exclusive interviews with Hillary Clinton, John McCain and more, this explosive film uncovers Trump-Putin ties dating back to the '70s and Soviet-style information warfare tactics used to affect the 2016 US presidential election.

World premiere

ALT-RIGHT: AGE OF RAGE

Dir. Adam Bhala Lough

Trigger warning: everything. Set against the horrific violence of the 2017 Charlottesville riots, alt-right leader Richard Spencer squares off against antifa activist Daryle Lamont Jenkins in this provocative look inside the two movements boiling over in America.

Canadian premiere

ANDY IRONS: KISSED BY GOD

Dirs. Steve Jones, Todd Jones

Three-time world surfing champion Andy Irons chased perfect pipe on the waves but dark demons on shore. Breathtaking cinematography captures the gorgeously wild star, but as mental illness troubles the waters, a heartbreaking tragedy unfolds.

World premiere

BEHIND THE CURVE

Dir. Daniel J. Clark

A rapidly rising number of people are convinced that the Earth is flat. Follow the leaders behind this conspiracy theory du jour as they rally to spread their message, challenge scientific proofs and flatten the globe once and for all.

World premiere

SCREEN DAILY – March 13, 2018 (3 of 5)

BLUE WALL

Dir. Richard Rowley Oscar-nominated director Richard Rowley offers a searing examination of the police killing of Laquan McDonald, tracing the conspiracy of silence that extended up to the Chicago mayor's office and revealing the journalists, activists and lawyers whose perseverance exposed the truth.

World premiere

THE FOURTH ESTATE

Dir. Liz Garbus

Granted unprecedented access and interviews with editors and reporters on the front lines, Emmy-winning and Oscar®-nominated filmmaker Liz Garbus' *The Fourth Estate* follows the

inner workings of *The New York Times*, revealing the challenges, triumphs and pitfalls of covering a president who has declared war on the free press.

International premiere

THE GAME CHANGERS

Dir. Louie Psihoyos

Oscar-winner Louie Psihoyos's (*The Cove*) explosive doc examines elite athletes' dramatically improved strength and performance when they switch from animal- to plant-based diets, and upends antiquated notions of masculinity and virility along the way.

Canadian premiere

MATANGI / MAYA / M.I.A.

Dir. Steve Loveridge

Two decades' worth of personal footage capture the complex evolution of M.I.A., the rapper and social justice activist whose outspoken rhymes tore up the charts, stoked political fires and captivated fans and critics worldwide.

Canadian premiere

SCREEN DAILY – March 13, 2018 (4 of 5)

MCQUEEN

Dir. Ian Bonhôte, Peter Ettedgui (co-director)

An intimate account of the life, career and artistry of legendary couturier, fashion maverick and creative genius Alexander McQueen, vividly brought to life via rare archival footage and revealing interviews with his inner circle.

International premiere

MERCURY 13

Dirs. David Sington, Heather Walsh

The pioneers enrolled in NASA's first female astronaut training program finally open up about their top-secret testing, which pitted them against the established boys' club of American astronauts of the 1950s.

International premiere

MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN

Dirs. Tommy Pallotta, Femke Wolting

With artificial intelligence potentially on track to surpass human capabilities within the next two decades, one filmmaker tests his own job security by building a robot to replace himself and discovers the truth of what's really at stake.

International premiere

MR. SOUL!

Dirs. Sam Pollard, Melissa Haizlip

Go backstage with the first all-Black variety show broadcast nationally on PBS, and meet its openly gay host, who was instrumental in ushering radical Black talent into American living rooms in the wake of the civil rights movement.

International premiere

THE NIGHT OF ALL NIGHTS

Dirs. Yasemin Şamdereli

In frank and funny interviews, four couples from across the world, united under vastly different circumstances but each together for more than 50 years, reflect on their relationships and share

SCREEN DAILY – March 13, 2018 (5 of 5)

their secrets for long-lasting love – for better or for worse.

International premiere

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Dir. Maxim Pozdorovkin

In a horrifying and hilarious collage, the story of Donald Trump's path to the presidency is told entirely through Russian propaganda, laying bare an empire of fake news and the cynical tactics of information warfare.

Canadian premiere

PICK OF THE LITTER

Dirs. Dana Nachman, Don Hardy

A litter of newborn Labrador puppies begins "basic training" to become service dogs for the blind (5 of 5)

– but who will make the cut? Their successes and failures are shared equally with the devoted caretakers who guide them on this rigorous two-year journey.

International premiere

TINY SHOULDERS: RETHINKING BARBIE

Dir. Andrea Blaugrund Nevins

With sales at a historic low and women's rights campaigns at fever pitch, Barbie is getting a radical makeover. Gloria Steinem, Roxane Gay, Mattel designers and others renegotiate the iconic doll's place in a world that both loves and loves to hate her.

International premiere

UNITED SKATES

Dirs. Dyana Winkler, Tina Brown

When America's last roller rinks are threatened with closure, thousands pull together to save and celebrate the vibrant underground subculture that has provided a safe space for the Black community since before the civil rights movement.

International premiere

<https://www.screendaily.com/news/alexander-mcqueen-mia-films-added-to-2018-hot-docs-line-up/5127434.article>

Hot Docs Lineup Includes World Premieres for Trump-Putin, Laquan McDonald Films

9:24 AM PDT 3/13/2018 by Etan Vlessing

North America's largest documentary festival also booked Liz Garbus' 'The Fourth Estate' and 'United Skates' after Tribeca bows.

U.S. presidential and racial politics feature in the first wave of world premieres unveiled for the upcoming Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

The fest on Tuesday said it will debut Jack Bryan's *Active Measures*, which uncovers Trump-Putin ties dating back to the 1970s that led up to Russian cyber-warfare impacting the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

There also will be a world premiere for Oscar-nominated director Richard Rowley's *Blue Wall*, which probes the 2014 Chicago police killing of Laquan McDonald and the City Hall cover-up that followed.

Also on tap is the Canadian bow of Maxim Pozdorovkin's Sundance title *Our New President*, a found-footage documentary that uses Russian propaganda to recount President Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign, as well as international debuts for two Tribeca titles — Showtime and Liz Garbus' Trump-focused doc series *The Fourth Estate*, and Tina Brown and Dyana Winkler's *United Skates*, which looks at modern-day roller rinks.

Also getting world premieres in Toronto's Special Presentations sidebar is Steve Jones and Todd Jones' *Andy Irons: Kissed by God*, a doc about a three-time surfing champion fighting mental illness; and Daniel J. Clark's *Behind the Curve*, which focuses on proponents of the Flat Earth conspiracy theory.

The Hot Docs fest, which will make additional lineup announcements in the coming weeks, is set to run April 26-May 6 in Toronto.

Hot Docs Adds 17 Special Presentation Titles

Posted on March 13th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)

By Pat Mullen

Hot Docs added 17 titles to its Special Presentations program this morning and this year's festival is looking mighty strong! The festival added some big names to the list including Oscar winner Louie Psihoyos (*The Cove*) with *The Game Changers*, which looks at the impact of plant-based diets on star athletes, and Liz Garbus (*What Happened, Miss Simone?*) with her timely doc *The Fourth Estate* about the legacy of *The New York Times* and the role of the press in the era of #FakeNews. Also on the list is the ever-prolific Sam Pollard (*Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me, Two Trains Runnin'*) with *Mr. Soul!* about the first all-Black variety show broadcast nationally on PBS and its openly gay host. Other arts and culture docs include *MATANGI / MAYA / M.I.A.* about singer M.I.A. and *McQueen* about fashion legend Alexander McQueen.

Four world premieres were announced as part of the line-up. They include Jack Bryan's *Active Measures*, which scores interviews with Hillary Clinton and John McCain while exploring the results and alleged corruption of the 2016 US presidential election, and Steve Jones and Todd Jones' *Andy Irons: Kissed by God* about surfer Andy Irons.

These films join 15 Special Presentations titles [announced previously](#). The new titles are:

Active Measures

D: Jack Bryan | P: Laura Dubois, Marley Clements | USA | 2018 | 112 min | World Premiere
Dive deep into one of the most deft espionage operations in history. Featuring exclusive interviews with Hillary Clinton, John McCain and more, this explosive film uncovers Trump-Putin ties dating back to the '70s and Soviet-style information warfare tactics used to affect the 2016 US presidential election.

Alt-Right: Age of Rage

D: Adam Bhala Lough | P: Michael Karbelnikoff, Alex Needles | 2018 | USA | 104 min |
Canadian Premiere

Trigger warning: everything. Set against the horrific violence of the 2017 Charlottesville riots, alt-right leader Richard Spencer squares off against antifa activist Daryle Lamont Jenkins in this provocative look inside the two movements boiling over in America.

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Andy Irons: Kissed by God

D: Steve Jones, Todd Jones | P: Enich Harris | 2018 | USA | 100 min | World Premiere

Three-time world surfing champion Andy Irons chased perfect pipe on the waves but dark demons on shore. Breathtaking cinematography captures the gorgeously wild star, but as mental illness troubles the waters, a heartbreaking tragedy unfolds.

Behind the Curve

D: Daniel J. Clark | P: Caroline Clark, Nick Andert, Daniel J. Clark | 2018 | USA | 96 min | World Premiere

A rapidly rising number of people are convinced that the Earth is flat. Follow the leaders behind this conspiracy theory du jour as they rally to spread their message, challenge scientific proofs and flatten the globe once and for all.

Blue Wall

D: Richard Rowley | P: Jamie Kalven, Jacqueline Soohen | 2018 | USA | 76 min | World Premiere

Oscar-nominated director Richard Rowley offers a searing examination of the police killing of Laquan McDonald, tracing the conspiracy of silence that extended up to the Chicago mayor's office and revealing the journalists, activists and lawyers whose perseverance exposed the truth.

The Fourth Estate

D: Liz Garbus | P: Liz Garbus, Jenny Carchman, Justin Wilkes | 2018 | USA | International Premiere

Granted unprecedented access and interviews with editors and reporters on the front lines, Emmy®-winning and Oscar®-nominated filmmaker Liz Garbus' THE FOURTH ESTATE follows the inner workings of The New York Times, revealing the challenges, triumphs and pitfalls of covering a president who has declared war on the free press.

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Oscar-winner Louie Psihoyos's (*The Cove*) explosive doc examines elite athletes' dramatically improved strength and performance when they switch from animal- to plant-based diets, and upends antiquated notions of masculinity and virility along the way.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – March 13, 2018 (3 of 4)

MATANGI / MAYA / M.I.A.

D: Steve Loveridge | P: Lori Cheadle, Andrew Goldman, Paul Mezey | 2018 | USA | 97 min | Canadian Premiere

Two decades' worth of personal footage capture the complex evolution of M.I.A., the musician

and social justice activist whose outspoken rhymes tore up the charts, stoked political fires and captivated fans and critics worldwide.

McQueen

D: Ian Bonhôte, Peter Ettedgui (co-director) | P: Ian Bonhôte, Andee Ryder, Nick Taussig, Paul Van Carter | 2018 | USA | 111 min | International Premiere

An intimate account of the life, career and artistry of legendary couturier, fashion maverick and creative genius Alexander McQueen, vividly brought to life via rare archival footage and revealing interviews with his inner circle.

Mercury 13

D: David Sington, Heather Walsh | P: David Sington, Heather Walsh, Brendan Byrne, Trevor Birney, Geraldine Creed | 2018 | Ireland | 80 min | International Premiere

The pioneers enrolled in NASA's first female astronaut training program finally open up about their top-secret testing, which pitted them against the established boys' club of American astronauts of the 1950s.

More Human Than Human

D: Tommy Pallotta, Femke Wolting | P: Tommy Pallotta, Femke Wolting, Bruno Felix, Bart Van Langendonck | 2018 | Netherlands, USA, Belgium | 79 min | International Premiere

With artificial intelligence potentially on track to surpass human capabilities within the next two decades, one filmmaker tests his own job security by building a robot to replace himself and discovers the truth of what's really at stake.

Mr. Soul!

D: Sam Pollard, Melissa Haizlip | P: Doug Blush, Melissa Haizlip | 2018 | USA | 102 min | International Premiere

Go backstage with the first all-Black variety show broadcast nationally on PBS, and meet its openly gay host, who was instrumental in ushering radical Black talent into American living rooms in the wake of the civil rights movement.

The Night of All Nights

D: Yasemin Şamdereli | P: Anja-Karina Richter, Arne Birkenstock, Christian Becker | 2018 |

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – March 13, 2018 (4 of 4)

Germany | 96 min | International Premiere

In frank and funny interviews, four couples from across the world, united under vastly different circumstances but each together for more than 50 years, reflect on their relationships and share their secrets for long-lasting love—for better or for worse.

Our New President

D: Maxim Pozdorovkin | P: Maxim Pozdorovkin, Joe Bender, Charlotte Cook | 2018 | USA | 77 min | Canadian Premiere

In a horrifying and hilarious collage, the story of Donald Trump's path to the presidency is told entirely through Russian propaganda, laying bare an empire of fake news and the cynical tactics of information warfare.

Pick of the Litter

D: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy | P: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy | 2018 | USA | 79 min | International Premiere

A litter of newborn Labrador puppies begins “basic training” to become service dogs for the blind—but who will make the cut? Their successes and failures are shared equally with the devoted caretakers who guide them on this rigorous two-year journey.

Tiny Shoulders: Rethinking Barbie

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When America's last roller rinks are threatened with closure, thousands pull together to save and celebrate the vibrant underground subculture that has provided a safe space for the Black community since before the civil rights movement.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6.

<http://povmagazine.com/blog/view/hot-docs-adds-17-special-presentation-titles>

Richard Poplak, Diana Neille's "Agents of Influence" among Hot Docs Forum picks

By Regan Reid

March 14, 2018

From Playback Daily

Four Canadian projects and coproductions have been selected for this year's Hot Docs Forum, an international documentary market and pitching event.

All told, 20 projects from 18 different countries were selected from 250 submissions. The docs will be presented to a round table of leading commissioning editors, film fund representatives, financiers, programming executives, sales agents and delegates during the May event.

Among the selected projects is EyeSteelFilm's *Agents of Influence*, produced with South Africa's Fireworx Media and Chronicle Productions. The doc, directed by Richard Poplak and Diana Neille, investigates the architects of the post-truth era and the growing global misinformation complex they've helped create.

Director Alejandro Bernal's *Cristian and Yimarly: Rebel Love*, produced by Canada and Colombia's Lulo Films, was also selected. Other Canadian productions heading to the forum are Oh Raffface Films' climate change doc *The Hottest August*, produced with U.S.-based Walking Productions and directed by **Brett Story**, and Liz Marshall's ***Meat The Future***, which asks whether sustainable lab-grown created meat can replace slaughtering living animals.

Decision makers confirmed for this year include BBC, Al Jazeera, CBC, Discovery Communications, Field of Vision, Film Independent, HBO Documentary Films, Knowledge, The New York Times Op-Docs, NHK, PBS, Redford Center, Sundance Institute, SVT, TVO, yesDocu, YLE, VICE, and others.

For the second consecutive year, the First Look Pitch Prize will award three projects a total of CDN\$140,000. The competition is aimed at supporting documentaries that examine social justice. First, second and third prizes receive \$75,000, \$40,000 and \$25,000, respectively with winners announced at the market's closing ceremony on May 2.

For the 10th consecutive year, the Hot Docs Corus Pitch Prize will also be awarded to the best Canadian pitch at the event, determined by a committee of non-Canadian international commissioning editors. The \$10,000 cash prize must be used towards the production and completion budget for the winning doc.

The Hot Docs Forum will take place on the mornings of May 1 and May 2.

The full list of participants follows below:

Realscreen – March 14, 2018 (2 of 3)

Agents of Influence

Production companies: EyeSteelFilm Inc.(Canada), Fireworx Media Pty (South Africa), Chronicle Productions Pty (South Africa)

Directors: Richard Poplak, Diana Neille

Balloon Wars

Production Companies: ?House of Real Aps? (Denmark), GROUPE DEUX (France)

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Born in China

Production Companies: Motto Pictures Inc. (USA), Pumpnickel Films (France), Next Generation Production, LLC (USA)

Directors: Nanfu Wang, Lynn Zhang

Case 993

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Director: Shareef Nasir

Cristian and Yimarly: Rebel Love

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Cuban Dancer

Production Companies: INDYCA s.n.c. (Italy), MICRODOCUMENTARIES, LLC (USA), Valdivia Film (Chile)

Director: Roberto Salinas

Joyce Carol Oates: I'll Take You There

Production Companies: Mantaray Film AB (Sweden), East Village Entertainment, LLC (USA)

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Production Companies: Meat the Future Inc. (Canada)

Director: Liz Marshall

Mirror Mirror on the Wall

Production Companies: DOCDAYS Productions GmbH (Germany), CNEX Foundation Limited (China)

Director: Sascha Schöber

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Nobody Loves Me

Production Company: NLM Movie LLC (USA)

Directors: Fariyah Zaman, Jeff Reichert

Reunited

Production Company: Moving Documentary ApS (Denmark)

Director: Mira Jargil

Realscreen – March 14, 2018 (3 of 3)

Softie

Production Companies: Lightbox Ltd. (Kenya), We are not the Machine Ltd. (USA), DUOfilm AS (Norway)
Director: Sam Soko

The Future of Forever

Production Company: Unlimited Film Operations Sp. z o.o. (Poland)
Director: Ana Brzezińska

The Hottest August

Production Companies: Oh Raftface Films Inc. (Canada), Walking Productions, LLC (USA)
Director: Brett Story

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Production Companies: Sancocho Publico A.C. (Venezuela), Spiraleye Productions Ltd. (UK), Pacto Audiovisual Prod. Assoc. (Brazil)
Director: Anabel Rodriguez

The Queen's Man

Production Company: Abstract LLC (USA)
Directors: Daniel Claridge, Andrew Coffman

The Rashomon Effect

Production Companies: Stories Seldom Seen Films, LLC (USA), Multitude Films, LLC (USA)
Director: **Lyric R. Cabral**

Uluru & the Magician

Production Companies: Brindle Films Pty Ltd. (Australia), The Doc Book Co. (Australia), The Finch Company Pty Ltd. (Australia)
Director: Anna Broinowski

Wishing on a Star

Production Companies: Videomante soc. coop. (Italy), Mischief Films & Co KG (Austria), Artcam Films, s.r.o. (Czech Republic), Peter Kerekes s.r.o. (Slovak Republic)
Director: Peter Kerekes

You Won't Kill Me

Production Company: Alpha Bear Productions Ltd. (UK)
Director: Leslie Lee

Agents of Influence among Hot Docs Forum picks

EyeSteelFilm's copro with South Africa's Fireworx Media and Chronicle Productions is one of 20 projects selected for the annual pitch event.

By Lauren Malyk

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Agents of Influence

Production companies: EyeSteelFilm Inc.(Canada), Fireworx Media Pty (South Africa),

PLAYBACK – March 14, 2018 (2 of 3)

Chronicle Productions Pty (South Africa)

Directors: Richard Poplak, Diana Neille

Balloon Wars

Production Companies: House of Real Aps (Denmark), GROUPE DEUX (France)

Director: Sissel Morrell Dargis

Born in China

Production Companies: Motto Pictures Inc. (USA), Pumpernickel Films (France), Next Generation Production, LLC (USA)

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Case 993

Production Company: KTF Films (USA)

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Production Companies: Mantaray Film AB (Sweden), East Village Entertainment, LLC (USA)

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Production Companies: Meat the Future Inc. (Canada)

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Production Companies: DOCDAYS Productions GmbH (Germany), CNEX Foundation Limited (China)

Director: Sascha Schöberl

Nobody Loves Me

Production Company: NLM Movie LLC (USA)

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PLAYBACK – March 14, 2018 (3 of 3)

Reunited

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Director: Leslie Lee

The Hot Docs Forum will take place on the mornings of May 1 and May 2.

<http://playbackonline.ca/2018/03/14/agents-of-influence-among-hot-docs-forum-picks/>

20 Projects to Participate in this Year's Hot Docs Forum

Posted on March 14th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)

By Pat Mullen



Liz Marshall, director of *Ghosts in the Machine* (pictured), is one of three Canadian filmmakers at this year's Forum

The Ghosts in Our Machine / We Animals

20 Canadian and international projects compete at this year's Hot Docs Forum. Today's announcement from the festival unveils the contenders for the major industry component of this year's festival. 18 countries are represented with co-productions accounting for the high margin across the 20 projects. The projects come from a pool of over 250 submissions.

Canadian filmmakers tapped to present at this year's forum include Liz Marshall (*The Ghosts in Our Machine*) with *Meat the Future*, Brett Story (*The Prison in 12 Landscapes*) with *The Hottest August*, and author Richard Poplak who joins Diana Neille on the co-pro *Agents of Influence*. The international directors include Nanfu Wang (*I am Another You*) with *Born in China* and Stig Björkman (*Ingrid Bergman: In Her Own Words*) with *Joyce Carol Oates: I'll Take You There*.

"We're incredibly proud of the breadth and scope of projects represented in this year's Forum," said Dorota Lech, Hot Docs industry programmer and Forum producer, in a statement from the festival. "We're really looking forward to ushering in this incredible group of filmmakers to share their work with decision makers and audiences."

The Hot Docs Forum offers three prizes that carry a total purse of \$140,000 in the returning *first look* Pitch Prize, which invites Forum donors to support documentaries that examine social justice issues. The Hot Docs Forum also awards the Hot Docs Corus Pitch Prize (\$10,000) for the best Canadian pitch and the Cuban Hat Award, which passes the hat to Forum observers to cast a ballot for their favourite project and to donate towards the pot. The cash value, access to

industry leaders, and focused number of participants make the Forum one of the world's most competitive and well-funded events for documentary filmmakers.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – March 14, 2018 (2 of 4)

“The Hot Docs Forum is regarded as one of the industry’s key pitch events, and with the addition of the First Look Pitch Prize it’s now one of the top-funded pitch forums in the world,” added Elizabeth Radshaw, industry programs director for Hot Docs. “We’re so pleased to be able to offer these talented and passionate filmmakers this significant financial support, which will tremendously benefit their project and help bring their cinematic vision to life.”

The Hot Docs Forum attracts over 500 industry leaders in round-tables with commissioning editors, funders, distributors, and producers. Participating decision makers confirmed for 2018 so far include representatives from ARTE, Al Jazeera, BBC Storyville, DOC SOCIETY, CBC, Cinereach, Chicken & Egg, Field of Vision, Film Independent, HBO Documentary Films, Knowledge, The New York Times Op-Docs, PBS, Sundance Institute, and TVO, among others. This year’s Forum takes place Tuesday, May 1 and Wednesday, May 2. Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6.

The 20 projects selected to participate this year are:

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(3 of 4)

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POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – March 14, 2018 (3 of 4)

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You Won't Kill Me

Production Company: Alpha Bear Productions Ltd. (UK)
Director: Leslie Lee

Toronto's Hot Docs festival reaches gender parity with 2018 lineup

BARRY HERTZ

PUBLISHED MARCH 20, 2018

This year's Hot Docs will feature the usual array of unexpected subjects and of-the-moment issues that the Toronto film festival has become known for over its 25 years.

The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man, for instance, looks not at the overarching career of the Ghostbusters star, but the actor's habit of randomly popping into strangers' lives via wedding crashes, photobombs and other arbitrary life-changing encounters. On the more serious side, Active Measures purports to uncover ties between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin dating back to the seventies, and features interviews with Hillary Clinton and John McCain.

Yet the most noteworthy aspect of Hot Docs 2018 is not what work is on the screen, but who is behind it. For the first time in the festival's history, it was revealed Tuesday morning, Hot Docs has reached gender parity with this year's lineup: Of the 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects on the program, 50 per cent of the work comes courtesy of female filmmakers. It is a goal the festival has long been inching toward – last year's program hit 48 per cent – and will be felt straight from opening night, when Maya Gallus's *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* makes its world premiere. The film cuts directly into the current #MeToo conversation by dissecting the restaurant world's long-standing culture of abuse and sexual harassment.

"Formidable filmmakers, in unrelenting pursuit of the truth, are a hallmark of this year's Hot Docs festival programming," Shane Smith, director of programming for the festival, said in a statement. "As we celebrate 25 years of Hot Docs, it's exciting to see that documentary storytelling is as outstanding and outspoken as ever, a vital cultural force in connecting us to our world and to each other."

On that zeitgeist-catching note, this year's 25th edition offers a wealth of hot-button films destined to stir the cultural conversation. Trump's America gets its fair share of Hot Docs coverage, not only via director Jack Bryan's aforementioned *Active Measures*, but also Adam

The Globe and Mail – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

Bhala Lough's *Alt-Right: Age of Rage*, Maxim Pozdorovkin's *Our New President* and the international premiere of *The Fourth Estate*, in which documentarian Liz Garbus gains unprecedented access inside *The New York Times* right after the POTUS declares a war against "fake news." (To hammer this theme home, Hot Docs is also presenting a 25th-anniversary screening of Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker's *The War Room*, which offered a blueprint for the modern political machine.)

More off-kilter subjects include *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, directors Morgan Neville and Junlei Li's look at the legacy of children's entertainer Fred Rogers; Daniel J. Clark's *Behind the Curve*, a cutely titled investigation into the rising number of people who believe that the Earth is flat; Dava Whisenant's *Bathtubs Over Broadway*, which examines the connection between the Great White Way and corporate America; and *The Trolley*, in which noted Canadian filmmaker Stephen Low makes the case for the resurrection of the humble streetcar. The latter film will make its world premiere in a free Imax screening at the newly reopened Ontario Place Cinesphere – a programming move that echoes the Toronto International Film Festival's decision last September to use the site for a complimentary screening of Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*, and looks to reinforce the concept of a film festival being an experience that cannot be replicated at home in front of Netflix.

"For many years, some of these festivals didn't look at Imax films, but for a documentary filmmaker, it's fantastic," says Low, whose late father Colin was a pioneer in large-format filmmaking. "It's weird because Toronto invented Imax, and some of the best documentarians are Canadian. But it's great that the Cinesphere is being opened again, and is at the centre of this festival."

Although other festivals such as TIFF have sought to reduce the number of movies they program, Hot Docs's 246 titles (including full-length, medium-length and short films) represent a record high for the organization. (Last year's festival offered 230 titles, the year before that 232, while the festival dipped below the 200 mark in 2014.) This year's Hot Docs runs April 26 through May 6 in Toronto (hotdocs.ca). <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-torontos-hot-docs-festival-reaches-gender-parity-with-2018-lineup/>

Hot Docs: Full Film Slate Revealed

10:56 AM PDT 3/20/2018 by Etan Vlessing

Top billing goes to female directors, including fest opener 'The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution' by Maya Gallus.

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival on Tuesday unveiled its full 2018 lineup, with half of this year's film directors being women.

That includes world premieres for Maya Gallus' *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*, a look at the kitchens of the world's top female chefs, which will open the fest; Paula Eiselt's *93Queen*, about an all-women ambulance service for New York City's Borough Park Hasidic Jewish community; and Sarah Menzies' *Afghan Cycles*, which focuses on women in Afghanistan striving for independence, and mobility, as part of a bike racing team.

Hot Docs' 25th edition, which is set to run April 26-May 6, will present in all 246 films from 56 countries and 154 female directors and 154 male directors, as some titles have co-helmers.

"It is time to listen to women, and this year, when half of the festival's films are directed by women, and two-thirds of the programmers are women, channeling my best Frances McDormand, 'We got some things to say,'" Myrocia Watamaniuk, senior international programmer at Hot Docs, told a Toronto press conference about the 50-50 gender split in this year's lineup.

Also debuting at Hot Docs next month is Kelly Showker's *Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial*, a campus date-rape film where a young woman turns to film to tell the full story of her attack after the police and courts let her down; Christina King and Elizabeth Castle's *Warrior Women*, about native American women struggling for human rights; and Audrey Gordon's *Siblings*, a film about an 11-year-old girl reuniting with biological brothers and sisters dispersed into the foster care system.

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Toronto also booked world bows for Alba Sotorra's *Commander Arian — A Story of Women, War and Freedom*, about an all-women battalion fighting in Syria, and Jessica Leski's *I Used to Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story*, about female boy-band fans.

Fandom is also on display in *United We Fan*, Michael Sparaga's film about super-fans of famous TV shows like *Star Trek*, *Veronica Mars* and *Designing Women* who fight to keep them on the air, and which is getting a world premiere in Toronto.

There also are international premieres for the Tribeca festival opener, Lisa D'Apolito's *Love, Gilda*, about *Saturday Night Live* pioneer Gilda Radner, and Heather Walsh and David Sington's *Mercury 13*, which recounts female fighter pilots who in 1961 tested for spaceflight before making way for NASA's "man-in-space" program.

Hot Docs earlier announced that two-time Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple will be honored at this year's edition with a lifetime achievement award.

'As outstanding and outspoken as ever:' Hot Docs unveils 25th anniversary lineup

Festival runs April 26-May 6 in Toronto

CBC News · Posted: Mar 20, 2018 11:53 AM ET | Last Updated: March 20

Hot Docs will showcase "formidable filmmakers" — with 50 per cent of the program comprising work by female filmmakers — as the international documentary festival celebrates its 25th anniversary this spring.

Organizers unveiled on Tuesday the complete list of films slated for its upcoming edition, which takes place April 26 to May 6 in Toronto.

"Formidable filmmakers, in unrelenting pursuit of the truth, are a hallmark of this year's Hot Docs Festival programming," Shane Smith, the festival's director of programming, said in a statement.

"It's exciting to see that documentary storytelling is as outstanding and outspoken as ever, a vital cultural force in connecting us to our world and to each other."

The festival will screen 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects — spread out across 14 programs — from more than 50 countries worldwide.

One curated series, entitled the Silence Breakers program, specifically spotlights stories of "brave women speaking up and being heard." Featured films include:

- *Netizens*, a profile of women fighting back against online harassment,
- *Afghan Cycles*, about barrier-breaking women training for the women's national cycling team in Afghanistan.
- *Yours in Sisterhood*, a look at the progress of feminism through a reflection on letters set to Ms. Magazine in the 1970s.

Organizers have expanded the festival's DocX program, which celebrates non-traditional formats. This section will feature virtual reality and interactive experiences, including installations exploring climate change in Greenland, following Indigenous volunteers working to protect the Amazon and a walk through of Jerusalem.

The [complete lineup can be found on the Hot Docs website.](#)

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Special guests set to attend the festival include rapper and activist M.I.A., Feminist Frequency founder Anita Sarkeesian, and filmmakers Alanis Obomsawin, Morgan Neville, Chris Hegedus and D. A. Pennebaker.

Opening night will feature the world premiere of *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*, Maya Gallus' peek into the kitchens of the world's top female chefs.

As part of the 25th anniversary celebrations, organizers will also hold a number of special presentations, including a free, IMAX world premiere screening of the public transit documentary *The Trolley* at the Ontario Place Cinesphere.

'This is the year of the female': Hot Docs achieves gender parity

By VICTORIA AHEARN

The Canadian Press

Tues., March 20, 2018



Afghan Cycles focuses on young women challenging gender and cultural barriers by training on Afghanistan's Women's National Cycling Team. (JENNY NICHOLS / HOT DOCS)

The topic of female empowerment that's been dominating headlines with the #MeToo movement is also being heavily reflected at this year's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

In announcing the lineup for the 25th edition of the Toronto festival on Tuesday, organizers said they've achieved gender parity for the first time, with 50 per cent of the films coming from female directors and many projects with themes relating to women rising up.

Last year's festival, by contrast, had about 48 per cent female-directed films.

"It wasn't something we were forcing ourselves to do," Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, said in an interview.

"We looked at the work, we looked at the great films that were coming in and the important stories that were being told and half of them are made by female filmmakers this year."

Among them is the opening-night film *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* by Canadian director Maya Gallus, which looks at top female chefs who have fought through gender barriers in Toronto, New York, London and France.

"Certainly a conversation about women taking up their space in male-dominated industries is very much in the zeitgeist and *The Heat* is exploring that question through the lens of the culinary world, specifically the restaurant industry," said Gallus.

While female-focused films are spread throughout the festival, there's also a program solely devoted to them in Silence Breakers, which features stories of women "speaking up and being

Toronto Star – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

heard.” They include *Slut or Nut, the Diary of a Rape Trial* by Kelly Showker, which follows Toronto activist Mandi Gray as she navigates the legal system after a sexual assault.

“I hope that our film is a call to action to support women filmmakers,” said Gray, noting the film was self-funded and didn’t receive any institutional support.

“It’s so great to be able to give the city this film to better educate both people that experience sexual assault, but also those that support people who have been sexually assaulted.”

Other films focusing on women include *Afghan Cycles*, about young Afghan women who are challenging gender and cultural barriers by training on the Women’s National Cycling Team.

Meanwhile, *Netizens* profiles women who have been targets of online harassment and have fought back against it.

And *Commander Arian — A Story of Women, War and Freedom* follows a female battalion as it retakes a Daesh-controlled city in Syria.

A total of 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries are at this year’s Hot Docs, which runs April 26 to May 6.

Star-studded offerings include The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man, about the random scenarios the comedy star has popped up in over the years. *Love, Gilda* profiles the late comedian Gilda Radner. And *Bachman* features Canadian musician Randy Bachman.

Other highlights include *Active Measures*, about Russia’s alleged involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. United We Fan features super-fans of TV shows who have launched campaigns to keep them on the air. And *Behind the Curve* profiles those who believe the Earth is flat.

Two-time Oscar-winning American documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple, whose film *A Murder in Mansfield* was screening at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Tuesday, will receive an outstanding achievement award retrospective at the fest.

The festival will have another retrospective program devoted to Canadian filmmaker John Walker.

“I think this is the year of the female and it’s also the golden age of documentary,” said Kopple, who won Oscars for *American Dream* and *Harlan County U.S.A.*, and is behind the hit doc *Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing*.

“Female empowerment has been suppressed for so long that now it’s time for it to get out there and to bloom and for people to cheer and to realize that if they can do it, I can do it too.”

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/03/20/this-is-the-year-of-the-female-hot-docs-achieves-gender-parity.html>

Hot Docs 2018 focuses on "silence-breaking" women

The documentary film festival's 25th lineup has also reached gender parity

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

MARCH 20, 2018

12:37 PM

The 25th edition of Hot Docs will have a big focus on films about women speaking out against injustice.

A portion of the festival's films are grouped into a program The Silence Breakers, but several films that coincide with the #MeToo and Time's Up movements are playing across the festival's 14 programs, which includes 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects – 50 per cent of which are directed by women.

The Silence Breakers includes docs like Kelly Showker's look at the anti-sexual assault activism of York University (and NOW contributor) Mandi Gray, **Slut Or Nut: The Diary Of A Rape Trial**; Cynthia Lowen's film about cyber harassment, **Netizens; Yours In Sisterhood**, Irene Lusztig's ode to letters written to storied second-wave feminist magazine Ms.; and **Afghan Cycles**, Sarah Menzies's portrait of a women's cycling team in Afghanistan.

Hot Docs will open with a film about women shaking up the food industry. Canadian director Maya Gallus's **The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution** is about female chefs that head up kitchens at some of the world's top restaurants, including Toronto.

A musician who has never been one to hold back on her thoughts is also coming to Toronto for the festival. Sri Lankan-born, UK-raised M.I.A. will be in town to attend the screening of Steven Loveridge's doc about her life and work, **MATANGI/MAYA/M.I.A.**, as part of the festival's Big Ideas program.

BIG IDEAS

Other Big Ideas guest speakers include Oscar-winning filmmaker Morgan Neville, who will be on hand to screen his doc on children's entertainer Mr. Rogers, **Won't You Be My Neighbor?**; the former president of Pacific Island nation Kiribati Anote Tong, who will discuss rising sea levels

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with Canadian filmmaker Mattieu Rytz as part of the **Anote's Ark** screening; and UCLA prof Sarah T.

Roberts, who will discuss privacy and technology with Hans Block and Moritz Rieseewieck, who delved into the secretive world of online content moderation for **The Cleaners**.

As part of the festival's 25th anniversary celebrations, Hot Docs will host a free world premiere screening of **The Trolley**, an IMAX film about the history of public transit vehicles known locally as "streetcars."

The interactive program will include a virtual reality experience and photo exhibit related to Anote's Ark, and other climate-change-theme exhibitions including the 360-film **Greenland Melting; The Guardians Of The Forest**, about Indigenous people trying to save the Amazon; and **Tree**, which puts viewers in the perspective of a tree growing in the Amazon rainforest.

PLUGGING INTO U.S. POLITICS

One high-profile world premiere is Jack Bryan's **Active Measures**, a film about espionage that touches on the 2016 U.S. presidential election and features interviews with Hillary Clinton and John McCain.

Other films plugging into U.S. politics and the global rise of right-wing nationalism include Adam Bhala Lough's **Alt-Right: Age Of Rage**, about alt-right leader Richard Spencer; **Our New President**, Maxim Pozdorovkin's collage film of Russian propaganda about Donald Trump; and Havard Bustnes's **Golden Dawn Girls**, about the women who take over the Greek ultranationalist political party Golden Dawn after its leaders are jailed.

As previously announced, the festival will include a focus on films from Mexico, a tribute to and retrospective of filmmaker **John Walker** and a retrospective on American documentarian **Barbara Kopple** (Harlan County U.S.A. and Miss Sharon Jones!), recipient of this year's Outstanding Achievement Award. She will also present a "special surprise screening" of an unnamed "rarely seen, mid-career masterpiece."

CANADIAN COUPS

Canadian fare at Hot Docs includes the Canada/US co-produced **The Game Changers**, The Cover director Louis Psihoyos's James Cameron exec-produced film about how plant-based diets can enhance physical performance.

(3 of 4)

Alanis Obomsawin will attend a 25th anniversary screening of her 1993 film **Kanehsatake: 270 Years Of Resistance**; John-Simon Chartier's film about competitive gaming **Playing Hard** will world premiere at Hot Docs; and Mor Loushy and Daniel Sivan's **The Oslo Diaries**, which will eventually air on HBO, stitches together rare archival footage to bring new insight into the failed Oslo Accords peace process between Israel and Palestine.

Alison McAlpine's **Cielo** is a visual film that focuses on astronomers examining the night sky in Chile's Atacama Desert; Samara Grace Chadwick's **1999** looks at a wave of teen suicides in New Brunswick; Laura Marie Wayne's **Love, Scott** profiles gay Halifax (now Toronto-based) musician Scott Jones, who was paralyzed in a homophobic attack that made national headlines in 2013; **United We Fan** is Michael Sparaga's doc about super-fans that work to revive cancelled TV shows; **Bachman**, John Barnard's film about Canadian rocker Randy Bachman, will world premiere at Hot Docs; and Christy Garland's **What Walaa Wants**, about a woman who joins the Palestinian Security Forces, will have its North American debut in Toronto.

FESTIVAL FAVES, FAMOUS NAMES AND OTHER HOT TICKETS

Some buzzy films continuing their festival runs at Hot Docs before landing on streaming platforms and TV include Sandi Tan's cinematic mystery **Shirkers**, which was picked up by Netflix following its Sundance premiere; recent Oscar nominee Elaine McMillion Sheldon's **Recovery Boys**, a look at the opioid crisis in America that will also stream on Netflix later this year; and Liz Garbus's Showtime doc series **The Fourth Estate**, which goes behind the scenes at the New York Times while reporters investigate President Trump.

As usual, Hot Docs will screen several docs about art and pop culture, including Lisa D'Apolito's film about late comedian Gilda Radner **Love, Gilda**; Ian Bonhote and Peter Ettedgui's **McQueen**, a profile of late fashion designer Alexander McQueen; Don Argott's **Believer**, about Imagine Dragons singer and devout Mormon Dan Reynolds; Sam Pollard and Melissa Haizlip's

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Mr. Soul!, about an all-Black variety show with a gay host that aired on PBS in the 70s; and **Queercore: How To Punk A Revolution**, German filmmaker Yony Leyser's look at the Toronto queercore scene of the 80s.

Other potential hot tickets will be Tim Wardle's Sundance hit **Three Identical Strangers**; Tommy Avallone's **The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From A Mythical Man**; Daniel J. Clark's **Behind The Curve**, about the growing movement of "flat earthers"; the 25th anniversary screening of Chris Hegedus and D.A. Pennebaker's **The War Room** (both (4 of 4)

filmmakers will attend); and **The American Meme**, Bert Marcus's doc about Paris Hilton, DJ Khaled, The Fat Jew and viral stars.

The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival runs from April 26 to May 6. Visit the festival's [website](#) for the full list of films and ticket info.

'This is the year of the female' filmmaker says as Hot Docs achieves gender parity

THE CANADIAN PRESS

VICTORIA AHEARN

March 20, 2018

3:30 PM EDT

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March 20, 2018

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Last year's festival, by contrast, had about 48 per cent female-directed films.

"It wasn't something we were forcing ourselves to do," Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, said in an interview.

"We looked at the work, we looked at the great films that were coming in and the important stories that were being told and half of them are made by female filmmakers this year."

Among them is the opening-night film "The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution" by Canadian director Maya Gallus, which looks at top female chefs who have fought through gender barriers in Toronto, New York, London and France.

"Certainly a conversation about women taking up their space in male-dominated industries is

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very much in the zeitgeist and 'The Heat' is exploring that question through the lens of the culinary world, specifically the restaurant industry," said Gallus.

While female-focused films are spread throughout the festival, there's also a program solely devoted to them in Silence Breakers, which features stories of women "speaking up and being heard." They include "Slut or Nut, the Diary of a Rape Trial" by Kelly Showker, which follows Toronto activist Mandi Gray as she navigates the legal system after a sexual assault.

"I hope that our film is a call to action to support women filmmakers," said Gray, noting the film was self-funded and didn't receive any institutional support.

"It's so great to be able to give the city this film to better educate both people that experience sexual assault, but also those that support people who have been sexually assaulted."

Other films focusing on women include "Afghan Cycles," about young Afghan women who are challenging gender and cultural barriers by training on the Women's National Cycling Team.

Meanwhile, "Netizens" profiles women who have been targets of online harassment and have fought back against it.

And "Commander Arian — A Story of Women, War and Freedom" follows a female battalion as it retakes an ISIS-controlled city in Syria.

A total of 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries are at this year's Hot Docs, which runs April 26 to May 6.

Star-studded offerings include "The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man," about the random scenarios the comedy star has popped up in over the years. "Love,

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Gilda” profiles the late comedian Gilda Radner. And “Bachman” features Canadian musician Randy Bachman.

Other highlights include “Active Measures,” about Russia’s alleged involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. “United We Fan” features super-fans of TV shows who have launched campaigns to keep them on the air. And “Behind the Curve” profiles those who believe the Earth is flat.

Two-time Oscar-winning American documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple, whose film “A Murder in Mansfield” was screening at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Tuesday, will receive an outstanding achievement award retrospective at the fest.

The festival will have another retrospective program devoted to Canadian filmmaker John Walker.

“I think this is the year of the female and it’s also the golden age of documentary,” said Kopple, who won Oscars for “American Dream” and “Harlan County U.S.A.,” and is behind the hit doc “Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing.”

“Female empowerment has been suppressed for so long that now it’s time for it to get out there and to bloom and for people to cheer and to realize that if they can do it, I can do it too.”

<http://nationalpost.com/pmnen/entertainment-pmn/this-is-the-year-of-the-female-filmmaker-says-as-hot-docs-achieves-gender-parity>

Screen Anarchy – March 20, 2018 (1 of 2)

March 20, 10:30 pm

Hot Docs 2018: Full Lineup Announced

Kurt Halfyard

CONTRIBUTING WRITER; TORONTO, CANADA ([@TRIFLIC](#))

Toronto's premiere documentary festival, and one of the largest in the world, dropped its full lineup today, a month ahead of its opening night on April 26. Let it be known that the documentary world is keen and proactive.

For its 25th edition, Hot Docs is showcasing 246 documentaries over 11 days from 56 different countries. While we have a more thorough curtain raiser closer to the festival's opening night, their press release offers a number of the highlights, including:

The opening night film, Maya Gallus's **The Heat**, promises a glimpse into the kitchens of the world's top female chefs. Gallus previously directed 2010's **Dish**, which looked at the quirkier side of the restaurant industry from nudie restaurants in Montreal to Maid Cafes in Tokyo.

Two former SNL alumni get full docs, there is **Gilda**, on the life and death of Gilda Radner, and the ironically presumptuous title of **The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From A Mythical Man**. Also, the Sundance hit, **Won't You Be My Neighbour?**, on iconic children's television host Mister Rogers will get its Canadian Premiere.

The Night Visions programme is always worth a look, and this year offers films on Toronto's boundary pushing gay filmmaker Bruce La Bruce in the 1980s, **Queercore: How Punk A Revolution**. **Obscuro Barroco** takes a look into Rio De Janeiro's festive nights through the eyes of a transgender icon.

Screen Anarchy – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

Epic sized transit doc, **The Trolley**, will grace the huge analog IMAX screen at Ontario's Cinesphere (and it is free).

Matangi/Maya/M.I.A. takes a look at rapper, song-writer, activist, and record producer M.I.A.

In terms of retro-programming, it is the 25th anniversary of D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus's **The War Room**. Regarding Bill Clinton's 1992 election campaign, this documentary classic will be viewed in 2018 with fresh eyes, particularly in light of the recent election and the #MeToo movement.

Further films covering the Russian interference of the recent US election (**Active Measures**), police shootings and corruption (**The Blue Wall, Crime+Punishment**), social media (**The American Meme, Netizens**), and fishing (**Of Fish And Foe**).

Look for an in-depth ScreenAnarchy focused curtain-raiser to come as the festival approaches, but you can [browse the entire festival catalog right now at the Hot Docs website](http://screenanarchy.com/2018/03/hotdocs-2018-full-line-up-announced.html).

City TV – March 20, 2018 (1 of 2)

New documentary a 'love letter' to streetcars and trolleys

BY NEWS STAFF

POSTED MAR 20, 2018 2:30 PM EDT

LAST UPDATED MAR 20, 2018 AT 3:20 PM EDT



A still from the documentary "The Trolley," premiering at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival from April 26 to May 6, 2018. [YOUTUBE](#)

Toronto has a love-hate relationship with its fleet of streetcars.

Sure, they're environmentally-friendly and charming, but they also slow down traffic, breakdown in extreme cold, and many feel they belong in a museum, rather than a modern metropolis.

But for every Rob Ford, who once proudly boasted that he planned to phase streetcars out entirely, there's someone like filmmaker Stephen Low, who believes the vehicles have the potential to change, and maybe even save, the world.

Low loves streetcars and trolleys so much that he's dedicated an entire documentary to the topic.

His latest film, *The Trolley*, will be screened in IMAX at the upcoming Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival. See the [schedule here](#).

"*The Trolley* stares down the automobile," Low said in a release. "In climate change, humanity faces a global crisis that is in scale and complexity unlike anything we have encountered before, yet we already have the solutions. And one of them is staring us in the face."

City TV – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

“I had to make this film to give streetcars their due,” he added. “The film may prove especially poignant and nostalgic for Torontonians, given that streetcars (trolleys) have been these charming fixtures in the city since before we can remember. I hope we are able to give people a look at how and why they evolved — and I hope that the film helps humanize the transit system that is so vital to our lives and future.”

The film chronicles the history of trolleys and streetcars around the world, with an emphasis on Toronto as one of the few North American cities to retain an extensive streetcar network.

Low told CityNews he realized streetcars were a contentious issue in Toronto, but said the Big Smoke is looked upon admirably on the world stage.

“When we were researching the film we heard all over the world that Toronto was kind of a hero of public transit and zero emissions, except here, there’s controversy here all the time about streetcars.”

But Low has little sympathy for drivers of exhaust-spewing vehicles who moan and groan about streetcars.

“We should be doing more of what we are doing on King Street which is kick the cars off the road,” he said.

“They should close all streetcar lines to cars.”

Maya Gallus' "The Heat" to open Hot Docs '18

By Jordan Pinto

March 20, 2018

Playback daily

Canadian documentary filmmaker **Maya Gallus'** *The Heat: A Kitchen Revolution* (pictured) will heat up the opening night of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

The Toronto-set fest unveiled its complete film lineup at a press conference today (March 20), with 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects being chosen from more than 3,000 submissions for the event's 25th edition. Of those selected, work by female filmmakers represented 50% of the 2018 program.

Gallus' *The Heat* was named a Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund recipient earlier in February. Making its world premiere at the fest, her doc about seven women chefs working in the world of professional cooking was one of six receiving a portion of CDN\$103,000 in financial support.

Notable films also screening in the **previously announced Special Presentations program** include: Jack Bryan's *Active Measures*, a deep-dive into Russia's alleged involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election; Steve and Todd Jones' *Andy Irons: Kissed By God*, profiling the legendary surfing champion and his struggles with mental illness; and Daniel J. Clark's *Behind the Curve*, which looks at the rise of "flat Earth" believers.

Films screening in the World Showcase program include Paula Eiselt's *93Queen*, about the first all-female ambulance corps in an Orthodox Brooklyn community; Assia Boundaoui's *The Feeling of Being Watched*, which uncovers one of the largest FBI terrorism probes conducted before 9/11; PJ Raval's *Call Her Ganda*, about the brutal murder of a transgender woman by a U.S. Marine in the Philippines; and Håvard Bustnes' *Golden Dawn Girls*, which reveals the women who take the reins of Greece's ultra-nationalist party after its leaders are jailed.

Also debuting in the World Showcase are Cynthia Wade and Sasha Friedlander's *Grit*, which sees the evolution of a young activist fighting for reparations 10 years after an industrial accident in Indonesia; Azadi R. Moghadam's *The Broker*, which offers a glimpse into the goings-on at an Iranian dating agency; Cassidy Friedman's *Circles*, about a high school counselor who swaps zero tolerance for restorative justice; and Vadym Ilkov's *My Father Is My Mother's Brother*, a touching family narrative about a bohemian singer/artist who becomes a father to his young niece when his sister's mental health deteriorates.

To honor Hot Docs' 25th anniversary, there will be a screening of Chris Hegedus and DA Pennebaker's *The War Room* (produced by Pennebaker Hegedus Films), and Alanis

Realscreen – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

Obomsawin's *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*. The Toronto doc fest will also have a free world premiere IMAX screening of director Stephen Low's *The Trolley* at the Ontario

Place Cinesphere. Low's doc examines the history of this mode of public transit through visits to 34 countries around the world.

This year's Big Ideas Series will include such guests as: director Morgan Neville and co-director of the Fred Rogers Center Dr. Junlei Li discussing the Fred Rogers doc *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*; director Cynthia Lowen, founder of Feminist Frequency Anita Sarkeesian and victims' rights attorney Carrie Goldberg, discussing *Netizens*; directors Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck and assistant professor of information studies, UCLA, Dr. Sarah T. Roberts, discussing *The Cleaners*; director Mattieu Rytz and former president of Kiribati, Anote Tong, discussing *Anote's Ark*; and rapper, singer-songwriter, record producer and activist M.I.A., in town to discuss *MATANGI / MAYA / M.I.A.*

Meanwhile, 21 NFB docs were selected for this year's Hot Docs lineup. Julien Fréchette's *My War* about four Western volunteers who've decided to battle ISIS is among those making its world premiere at the festival.

World premieres in the Canadian Spectrum program, which explores issues affecting Canadians and the country, are ***The Guardians***, produced by No Equal Entertainment and directed by Billie Mintz and exploring the corruption of Nevada's guardianship system; *Letter from Masanjia*, following the mystery behind an SOS letter written by a Chinese political prisoner that turns up in Oregon's Halloween decorations, and directed by Leon Lee and produced by Flying Cloud Productions; *This Mountain Life*, about a 60-year-old mother and daughter's trek through the Rocky Mountains, and directed by Grant Baldwin and produced by Peg Leg Films; and *United We Fan* a doc on how superfans of famous TV shows fight to keep them on air, from Pancakes and Eggs Productions and directed by Michael Sparaga. *Harvest Moon*, from director Zaheed Mawani and produced by Medium Density Fibreboard Films, will also have its North American premiere in the category.

In the DocX category, a section dedicated to celebrating documentaries that feature virtual reality and interactive experiences, is EyeSteelFilms' *Anote's Ark*, a VR experience and photo exhibit from director Matthieu Rytz.

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival runs from April 26 to May 6, 2018.

Maya Gallus' *The Heat* to open Hot Docs 2018

The NFB also has 21 projects participating in the festival, which this year sees 50% of its titles led by women filmmakers.

By Lauren Malyk

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Meanwhile, 21 NFB docs were selected for this year's Hot Docs lineup. Julien Fréchette's *My War* about four Western volunteers who've decided to battle ISIS (produced and exec produced by Colette Loumède) is among those making its world premiere at the festival.

Other NFB docs tapped for Canadian premieres include **Jean-François Caissy's *First Stripes*** (exec produced by Colette Loumède), director Laura Marie Wayne's feature doc debut *Love, Scott* (produced and exec produced by Annette Clarke) and Christy Garland's *What Walaa Wants* produced by Murmur Media, Final Cut for Real and the NFB (producers include Garland, Matt Code, Anne Köhncke, Justine Pimlott and exec produced by Anita Lee).

Parabola Films' copro with Beauvoir Films and the NFB, *1999* is also making its Ontario premiere. Director Samara Grace Chadwick's first feature doc follows Chadwick as she revisits the city she fled as a teen when multiple classmates at her high school took their lives. Producers include Selin Murat, Sarah Spring, Aline Schmid, Kat Baulu, Jac Gautreau and Marie-Claude Dupont. Exec producers include Annette Clarke and Dominic Desjardins.

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PLAYBACK – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

We Fan a doc on how superfans of famous TV shows fight to keep them on air (produced by Pancakes and Eggs Productions and directed by Michael Sparaga). *Harvest Moon* from director Zaheed Mawani (produced by Medium Density Fibreboard Films) will also have its North American premiere in the category.

To honour Hot Docs' 25th anniversary, there will be a screening of Alanis Obomsawin's *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, a doc about the standoff between the Mohawks, Quebec police and the Canadian army. The Toronto doc fest will also have a free world premiere IMAX screening of director Stephen Low's *The Trolley* (produced by The Stephen Low Company) at the Ontario Place Cinesphere. Low's doc examines the history of this mode of public transit through visits to 34 countries around the world. Finally, Chris Hegedus and D A Pennebaker's U.S. doc *The War Room* (produced by Pennebaker Hegedus Films) will also have a special screening.

In the DocX category, a section dedicated to celebrating documentaries that feature virtual reality and interactive experiences, is EyeSteelFilms' *Anote's Ark*, a VR experience and photo exhibit from director Matthieu Rytz.

Some of the other Canadian films also selected for the festival include **the Canada/Israel copro** ***The Oslo Diaries*** from directors Mor Loushy and Daniel Sivan (produced by Intuitive Pictures), the Canada-U.S. coventure *The Game Changers* (directed by Louie Psihoyos and produced by ReFuel Productions), coventure *Playing Hard* from director Jean-Simon Chartier (produced by MC2 Productions), *Abnormal Freedom* from directors Kiyari McNab and Andrea Cessna (produced by PPRPLN productions), *A Drummer's Dream* from director John Walker (produced by John Walker Productions) and *A Little Wisdom* from Yuqi Kang (produced by Blue Goat Films), as well as the short film **My Dead Dad's Porno Tapes** (directed by Charlie Tyrell and produced by LaRue Entertainment and Julie Baldassi), which last week won the documentary short competition at SXSW.

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival runs from April 26 to May 6, 2018.

Hot Docs, EFP Offer Peek at ‘Changing Face of Europe’

By [Leo Barraclough](#)

[@LeoBarraclough](#)



CREDIT: EFP

[European Film Promotion](#), a body that seeks to raise the profile of the continent’s movies, has teamed up with Toronto documentary film festival [Hot Docs](#) to launch a new program. “The Changing Face of Europe” presents 10 recent European documentary features, selected by the festival from 36 films submitted by EFP’s member organizations.

The initiative aims to promote “a better understanding and insight into the rapidly evolving processes affecting Europe today,” EFP said. The lineup at [Hot Docs](#), which runs April 26-May 6, includes one world premiere, two international premieres and four North American premieres. The documentaries, which will be introduced by their filmmakers, will touch on a wide range of topics.

Clément Cogitore’s “Braguino” shows the clash between traditional values and a freewheeling outlook among a community living in the vast expanse of the Siberian Taiga. In “Global Family,” Melanie Andernach and Andreas Köhler follow a family scattered around the globe following their flight from war-torn Somalia. Heike Bachelier and Andy Heathcote show in “Of Fish and Foe” how traditional salmon fishermen on the Scottish coast have to fight to make a living.

“Rodeo” covers the election in Estonia, which brought to power Europe’s youngest Prime Minister, Mart Laar, and the conflict between idealists and a rising economic elite. The effects of war, especially on children, are reflected in “The Distant Barking of Dogs” by Simon Lereng Wilmont, documenting the life of 10-year-old Oleg in the Eastern part of Ukraine.

“The Russian Job” by Petr Horký centers on a run-down Czech automobile factory, once the pride of the former Soviet Union, which takes on an experienced Swedish manager to return it to prosperity without wanting to commit to changes. “The White World According to Daliborek” by Vít Klusák, a stylized portrait of a Czech Neo-Nazi, gives an insight the lives of ordinary people with extremist views. On a lighter note, Diego Pascal Panarello’s “The Strange Sound of Happiness” shows how the director’s dream of becoming a musician turns to dust until an ancient musical instrument, the mouth harp, points him in a new direction.

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Two films center round personal stories to “talk about cultural identity and new concepts of life.” “When Pigs Come” by Biljana Tutorov follows upbeat Serbian grandmother Dragoslava in her daily life. Over the years she has lived in five countries without ever moving from her apartment in a small border town. In “To Want, to Need, to Love” by Ilir Hasanaj, a recently separated couple tries to find a way to still work and live together by joining a performance art project travelling through Europe.

'This is the year of the female' filmmaker says as Hot Docs achieves gender parity

CANADIAN PRESS, Updated: March 20, 2018

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"It wasn't something we were forcing ourselves to do," Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, said in an interview.

"We looked at the work, we looked at the great films that were coming in and the important stories that were being told and half of them are made by female filmmakers this year."

Among them is the opening-night film "The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution" by Canadian director Maya Gallus, which looks at top female chefs who have fought through gender barriers in Toronto, New York, London and France.

"Certainly a conversation about women taking up their space in male-dominated industries is very much in the zeitgeist and 'The Heat' is exploring that question through the lens of the culinary world, specifically the restaurant industry," said Gallus.

While female-focused films are spread throughout the festival, there's also a program solely devoted to them in Silence Breakers, which features stories of women "speaking up and being heard." They include "Slut or Nut, the Diary of a Rape Trial" by Kelly Showker, which follows Toronto activist Mandi Gray as she navigates the legal system after a sexual assault.

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Montreal Gazette – March 20, 2018 (2 of 3)

“It’s so great to be able to give the city this film to better educate both people that experience sexual assault, but also those that support people who have been sexually assaulted.”

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Montreal Gazette – March 20, 2018 (3 of 3)

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"It's so great to be able to give the city this film to better educate both people that experience sexual assault, but also those that support people who have been sexually assaulted."

Other films focusing on women include "Afghan Cycles," about young Afghan women who are challenging gender and cultural barriers by training on the Women's National Cycling Team.

Meanwhile, "Netizens" profiles women who have been targets of online harassment and have fought back against it.

Regina Leader Post – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

And “Commander Arian — A Story of Women, War and Freedom” follows a female battalion as it retakes an ISIS-controlled city in Syria.

A total of 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries are at this year’s Hot Docs, which runs April 26 to May 6.

Star-studded offerings include “The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man,” about the random scenarios the comedy star has popped up in over the years. “Love, Gilda” profiles the late comedian Gilda Radner. And “Bachman” features Canadian musician Randy Bachman.

Other highlights include “Active Measures,” about Russia’s alleged involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. “United We Fan” features super-fans of TV shows who have launched campaigns to keep them on the air. And “Behind the Curve” profiles those who believe the Earth is flat.

Two-time Oscar-winning American documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple, whose film “A Murder in Mansfield” was screening at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Tuesday, will receive an outstanding achievement award retrospective at the fest.

The festival will have another retrospective program devoted to Canadian filmmaker John Walker.

“I think this is the year of the female and it’s also the golden age of documentary,” said Kopple, who won Oscars for “American Dream” and “Harlan County U.S.A.,” and is behind the hit doc “Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing.”

“Female empowerment has been suppressed for so long that now it’s time for it to get out there and to bloom and for people to cheer and to realize that if they can do it, I can do it too.”

La moitié des oeuvres réalisées par des femmes aux Hot Docs 2018

Publié le mardi 20 mars 2018

Par Claudia Hébert



La réalisatrice Torontoise Maya Gallus présente son film « *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* » au festival Hot Docs 2018 Photo : Hot Docs

Pour célébrer ses 25 années d'existence, le Festival international du documentaire Hot Docs de Toronto annonce une édition 2018 qui fait une grande place aux femmes.

La sélection comprend 262 films provenant de 56 pays. La parité est atteinte cette année avec 50 % de ces oeuvres qui ont été réalisées par des femmes.

Le programme *The Silence Breakers* est notamment dédié à des femmes ayant brisé le silence; que ce soit dans des questions d'agressions sexuelles (*Slut or Nut*, *The Diary of a Rape Trial*), de harcèlement en ligne (*Netizens*) ou de féminisme (*Yours in Sisterhood*).

Le festival donne son coup d'envoi le 26 avril avec *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*, de la Torontoise Maya Gallus. Ce documentaire gastronomique nous fait découvrir le combat de sept femmes à la tête des cuisines d'établissements réputés; un milieu où être chef est encore souvent une chasse gardée masculine.

La programmation canadienne nous amène également dans le quotidien de nouvelles recrues des Forces armées canadiennes avec le film *Première armes*, de Jean-François Caissy.

Snowbirds, de Joannie Lafrenière, explore une communauté de retraités québécois qui se sont établis en Floride; et *1999*, de Samara Grace Chadwick revient sur une vague de suicides ayant eu lieu à la fin des années 90 dans une petite ville du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Un événement spécial aura lieu à la Ciné sphère, première salle de projection IMAX permanente au monde, inaugurée en 1971 et récemment rénovée. Les festivaliers pourront y voir gratuitement *The Trolley*, un film explorant l'évolution des services de transport public dans 34 pays à travers le monde.

Les billets pour Hot Docs 2018 sont en vente dès le 27 mars.

CBC Ici Radio Canada – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

Les projections ayant lieu pendant la journée demeurent gratuites pour les étudiants et les aînés tout au long du festival.

Le 25e Festival de documentaire Hot Docs : du 26 avril au 6 mai 2018.

'This is the year of the female' filmmaker says as Hot Docs achieves gender parity

Canadian Press

Published: March 20, 2018

Updated: March 20, 2018 2:04 PM MDT

TORONTO — The topic of female empowerment that's been dominating headlines with the #MeToo movement is also being heavily reflected at this year's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

In announcing the lineup for the 25th edition of the Toronto festival on Tuesday, organizers said they've achieved gender parity for the first time, with 50 per cent of the films coming from female directors and many projects with themes relating to women rising up.

Last year's festival, by contrast, had about 48 per cent female-directed films.

"It wasn't something we were forcing ourselves to do," Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, said in an interview.

"We looked at the work, we looked at the great films that were coming in and the important stories that were being told and half of them are made by female filmmakers this year."

Among them is the opening-night film "The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution" by Canadian director Maya Gallus, which looks at top female chefs who have fought through gender barriers in Toronto, New York, London and France.

"Certainly a conversation about women taking up their space in male-dominated industries is very much in the zeitgeist and 'The Heat' is exploring that question through the lens of the culinary world, specifically the restaurant industry," said Gallus.

While female-focused films are spread throughout the festival, there's also a program solely devoted to them in Silence Breakers, which features stories of women "speaking up and being heard." They include "Slut or Nut, the Diary of a Rape Trial" by Kelly Showker, which follows Toronto activist Mandi Gray as she navigates the legal system after a sexual assault.

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Edmonton Sun – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

"It's so great to be able to give the city this film to better educate both people that experience sexual assault, but also those that support people who have been sexually assaulted."

Other films focusing on women include "Afghan Cycles," about young Afghan women who are challenging gender and cultural barriers by training on the Women's National Cycling Team.

Meanwhile, "Netizens" profiles women who have been targets of online harassment and have fought back against it.

And "Commander Arian — A Story of Women, War and Freedom" follows a female battalion as it retakes an ISIS-controlled city in Syria.

A total of 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries are at this year's Hot Docs, which runs April 26 to May 6.

Star-studded offerings include "The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man," about the random scenarios the comedy star has popped up in over the years. "Love, Gilda" profiles the late comedian Gilda Radner. And "Bachman" features Canadian musician Randy Bachman.

Other highlights include "Active Measures," about Russia's alleged involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. "United We Fan" features super-fans of TV shows who have launched campaigns to keep them on the air. And "Behind the Curve" profiles those who believe the Earth is flat.

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"I think this is the year of the female and it's also the golden age of documentary," said Kopple, who won Oscars for "American Dream" and "Harlan County U.S.A.," and is behind the hit doc "Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing."

"Female empowerment has been suppressed for so long that now it's time for it to get out there and to bloom and for people to cheer and to realize that if they can do it, I can do it too."

<http://edmontonsun.com/entertainment/movies/this-is-the-year-of-the-female-filmmaker-says-as-hot-docs-achieves-gender-parity/wcm/369b1e00-936b-411d-9bca-40ab90138c15>

MASSIVE DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL HOT DOCS PULLS OUT STOPS FOR 25TH YEAR

March 20, 2018
By Kim Hughes

If there was a key takeaway from Tuesday's press conference announcing the 2018 line-up of films screening at the 25th annual Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, it was this: truth really is stranger than fiction.

Luckily, there is an army of filmmakers worldwide obsessed with documenting the best non-fiction stories on the planet via film, video, and smartphone. Also, those fortunate enough to be in Toronto April 26 to May 6 during the Festival's run can anticipate some phenomenal-looking features, shorts, and other dazzling visual ephemera.

Among them, Maya Gallus' *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*, a glimpse into the kitchens of the world's top female chefs which serves as the Festival's opening night presentation. (It's also a world premiere).

Other notable films in the Special Presentations program include: Active Measures, a deep-dive into Russia's alleged involvement in the 2016 US presidential election; *Andy Irons: Kissed By God*, which profiles the legendary surfing champion and his struggles with mental illness; *Behind the Curve*, which looks at the rise of flat Earth believers; The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man, which goes in search of true stories of the famous actor popping up in random scenarios; and Love, Gilda, a touching biopic of beloved actor and comedian Gilda Radner.

It may be worth pausing to tally some numbers to put this in perspective. From 3059 film submissions, this year's slate will present 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries in 14 screening programs, with work by female filmmakers representing 50 per cent of the 2018 program.

Original CIN – March 20, 2018 (2 of 3)

Some 16 screens across the city will be utilized including Cinesphere at Ontario Place which hosts a free world premiere IMAX screening of The Trolley on May 5 at 3 pm.

Additionally, Hot Docs will also present 25th anniversary screenings of Chris Hegedus and DA Pennebaker's The War Room and Alanis Obomsawin's Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance, at which the directors will be present for post-screening discussions.

According to programmers, last year's Hot Docs welcomed some 215,000 souls. This year may well top that, thanks in part to the Festival's broad access, once again offering free same-day tickets for all screenings before 5 pm to seniors (60+) and students with valid photo I.D. at the venue box offices (subject to availability), courtesy of CBC Docs.

Some other films that caught our attention: I, Dolours, a first-hand account from militant IRA activist Dolours Price of her life; Love, Scott, a heart-breaking film about a young gay musician's brave recovery after a vicious attack left him paralyzed; This Mountain Life, which follows a 60-year-old mother and daughter's six-month trek through the stunning but treacherous Rocky Mountains; United We Fan, about how super-fans of famous TV shows fight to keep them on the air; The Feeling of Being Watched, which uncovers one of the largest FBI terrorism probes conducted before 9/11; Of Fish and Foe, the story of Scotland's last traditional fishing family battling animal activists on the high seas; Don't Be Nice, about an upstart slam poetry team from NYC preparing for national championships; and Bachman, an epic biopic of Canadian music legend Randy Bachman.

And that's just the tip of the iceberg, and subjective to boot.

Your best bet is to pour a stiff one, find a comfy chair, and spend some time on the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival website, reading and perusing. As for ticket info...

Starting Tuesday, March 20, 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 27 at 11 am, Festival tickets will be available to the public. Visit the

Original CIN – March 20, 2018 (3 of 3)

CraveTV Box Office at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, located at 506 Bloor Street West for ticket, package, and pass sales and ticket redemption.

Tickets can be purchased in person, online at www.hotdocs.ca, or by phone at 416-637-3123. Single tickets to screenings are \$17 each, and \$19 -\$24 each to special events. Tickets to Food & Film are \$60-\$75. A Festival 6-Pack is \$99, a Festival 10-Pack is \$149, a Festival 20-Pack is \$249, and a Premium Pass is \$359.

As mentioned, Hot Docs offers free same-day tickets for all screenings before 5 pm to seniors and students with valid photo I.D. at the venue box offices. Phew!

<https://www.original-cin.ca/posts/2018/3/20/massive-documentary-festival-hot-docs-pulls-out-stops-for-25th-year>

Exclaim! – March 20, 2018

Hot Docs Finally Achieves Gender Parity with 2018 Lineup

For its 25th anniversary, 50 percent of the festival's program comes from female filmmakers

By **Josiah Hughes**

Published Mar 20, 2018

Today, the **Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival** have announced the lineup for their 25th edition and it's truly a doozy. The festival will feature a staggering 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries in 14 screening programs. More importantly, the lineup will offer gender parity as 50 percent of its content will come from female filmmakers.

"Formidable filmmakers, in unrelenting pursuit of the truth are a hallmark of this year's Hot Docs Festival programming, and Toronto audiences have the chance to explore stories from around the world, and engage with the people who tell them," said Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, in a press release. "As we celebrate 25 years of Hot Docs, it's exciting to see that documentary storytelling is as outstanding and outspoken as ever, a vital cultural force in connecting us to our world and to each other."

The fest will celebrate its milestone year with a free world premiere IMAX screening of Stephen Low's streetcar-themed doc *The Trolley* on May 5 at the Ontario Place Cinesphere.

As for the rest of the program, the festival includes an enormous sampling of topics from all over the globe. You can peruse the mammoth lineup **here**.

Hot Docs runs from April 26 to May 6 at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in Toronto.

Hot Docs Brings ‘The Heat’ as Women Rule 2018 Line-up

Posted on March 20th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)

By Pat Mullen



Maya Gallus's *The Heat* will open Hot Docs 2018
Courtesy of Hot Docs

Hot Docs brings *The Heat* for its 25th anniversary! Women ruled the press conference announcing the selections for Hot Docs's 2018. This year's festival opens with *The Heat: A Kitchen @evolution*, which is the latest film from director Maya Gallus. Gallus was last year's Focus On honouree at Hot Docs and *The Heat* marks the seventh film that Gallus has premiered at the festival.

The Heat takes audiences inside the kitchens of high caliber restaurants where women are taking back the title of Master Chef. It's a timely selection with workplace harassment and inequality finally drawing awareness and re-shaping the film industry. Gallus took the stage at this morning's press conference where she expressed her pride at kicking off the festival's silver anniversary with a doc "about powerful women transforming an industry and contributing to what has become a global conversation."

Gallus's film is an appropriate selection for this year's festival, particularly since Hot Docs has achieved true gender parity with 50% of the 262 films and interdisciplinary works directed by women, along with an all-female directed series 'The Silence Breakers' about women who speak truth to power. *The Heat* also makes it three years in a row that Hot Docs has opened the festival with a film by a female director.

Hot Docs welcomed another female force in the documentary world as two-time Academy Award winner Barbara Kopple took the stage as this year's Outstanding Achievement Award

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – March 20, 2018 (2 of 2)

recipient. “26 years ago, we didn’t have anything that saluted documentary, so for me, this is wonderful. Hot Docs has put together an international marketplace,” Kopple said to the crowd. “You guys have done it all.”

Kopple added that she felt particularly humbled to be the focus of the Outstanding Achievement Retrospective after her mentor, the late Albert Maysles, received the inaugural spotlight in 1999. “I feel glad to be walking in his footsteps,” she exclaimed. Kopple will engage audiences in a special conversation on May 3rd at the festival and Hot Docs will screen some of her most acclaimed films including *Miss Sharon Jones!* the Dixie Chicks/free speech doc *Shut Up and Sing*, the Mariel Hemingway portrait *Running from Crazy*, and her Oscar-winning landmark *Harlan County USA*.

On the Canadian front, Hot Docs will feature 56 Canadian productions and co-productions. The highlights include Shasha Nakhai’s *Take Light*, a provocative study of the energy crisis in Nigeria; Grant Baldwin’s breathtakingly cinematic *This Mountain Life*; Michael Sparaga’s *United We Fan*, about TV “super-fans” who fight to keep their favourite shows on the air; Laura Marie Wayne’s *Love, Scott*, a heartbreaking film about a young gay musician’s brave recovery after a vicious attack left him paralyzed; Samara Chadwick’s *1999*, a personal return to the wave of suicides at École Mathieu-Martin in the titular year; Michael Del Monte’s *Transformer*, about bodybuilder Matt “Kroc” Kroczaleski’s male to female transition; and three stories of war arise in the NFB films *My War* by Julien Fréchette and *First Stripes* by Jean-François Caissy and the NFB co-pro *What Walaa Wants* by Christy Garland.

Mathieu Rytz’s *Anote’s Ark* represents Canadian content in this year’s Scotiabank Big Ideas series. Rytz and Kiribati Anote Tong, former president of the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati, will take the stage for one of the series’ extended conversations. Other highlights in the series include *Will You Be My Neighbour?*, the acclaimed Mr. Rogers doc from Oscar winning *20 Feet From Stardom* director Morgan Neville. Neville will participate in a post-screening Q&A with Dr. Junlei Li, director of the Fred Rogers Centre.

Other highlights include a 25th anniversary of Alanis Obomsawin’s *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* and a Focus On spotlight on the career of John Walker.

'This is the year of the female' filmmaker says as Hot Docs achieves gender parity

ENTERTAINMENT

by VICTORIA AHEARN, THE CANADIAN PRESS

Posted Mar 20, 2018 3:29 pm EDT

Last Updated Mar 20, 2018 at 4:00 pm EDT

TORONTO – The topic of female empowerment that's been dominating headlines with the #MeToo movement is also being heavily reflected at this year's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

In announcing the lineup for the 25th edition of the Toronto festival on Tuesday, organizers said they've achieved gender parity for the first time, with 50 per cent of the films coming from female directors and many projects with themes relating to women rising up.

Last year's festival, by contrast, had about 48 per cent female-directed films.

"It wasn't something we were forcing ourselves to do," Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs, said in an interview.

"We looked at the work, we looked at the great films that were coming in and the important stories that were being told and half of them are made by female filmmakers this year."

Among them is the opening-night film "The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution" by Canadian director Maya Gallus, which looks at top female chefs who have fought through gender barriers in Toronto, New York, London and France.

"Certainly a conversation about women taking up their space in male-dominated industries is very much in the zeitgeist and 'The Heat' is exploring that question through the lens of the culinary world, specifically the restaurant industry," said Gallus.

While female-focused films are spread throughout the festival, there's also a program solely devoted to them in Silence Breakers, which features stories of women "speaking up and being heard." They include "Slut or Nut, the Diary of a Rape Trial" by Kelly Showker, which follows Toronto activist Mandi Gray as she navigates the legal system after a sexual assault.

680 News – March 20, 2018 (2 of 3)

“I hope that our film is a call to action to support women filmmakers,” said Gray, noting the film was self-funded and didn’t receive any institutional support.

“It’s so great to be able to give the city this film to better educate both people that experience sexual assault, but also those that support people who have been sexually assaulted.”

Other films focusing on women include “Afghan Cycles,” about young Afghan women who are challenging gender and cultural barriers by training on the Women’s National Cycling Team.

Meanwhile, “Netizens” profiles women who have been targets of online harassment and have fought back against it.

And “Commander Arian — A Story of Women, War and Freedom” follows a female battalion as it retakes an ISIS-controlled city in Syria.

A total of 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries are at this year’s Hot Docs, which runs April 26 to May 6.

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Other highlights include “Active Measures,” about Russia’s alleged involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. “United We Fan” features super-fans of TV shows who have launched campaigns to keep them on the air. And “Behind the Curve” profiles those who believe the Earth is flat.

Two-time Oscar-winning American documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple, whose film “A Murder in Mansfield” was screening at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Tuesday, will receive an outstanding achievement award retrospective at the fest.

The festival will have another retrospective program devoted to Canadian filmmaker John Walker.

“I think this is the year of the female and it’s also the golden age of documentary,” said Kopple, who won Oscars for “American Dream” and “Harlan County U.S.A.,” and is behind the hit doc “Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing.”

“Female empowerment has been suppressed for so long that now it’s time for it to get out there and to bloom and for people to cheer and to realize that if they can do it, I can do it too.”

Hot Docs 2018 Program Is 50 Percent Women-Directed

BY Laura Berger March 21, 2018

North America's largest documentary festival has announced its 2018 slate, and this year's edition of Hot Docs marks a major milestone. Eighty-six of 171 features screening are directed or co-directed by women, amounting to 50 percent of the program. Hailing from 56 countries, the titles set to screen were chosen from over 3,000 submissions.

The Toronto-based fest will kick off with the world premiere of Maya Gallus' "The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution," an all-access look into the kitchens of the world's top female chefs. Other Special Presentations include "The Fourth Estate," Liz Garbus' foray into the inner workings of The New York Times, Tribeca Film Fest opener "Love, Gilda," Lisa D'Apolito's portrait of late "SNL" star Gilda Radner, and Dana Nachman's "Pick of the Litter," a look into how service dogs are trained.

Among the women-helmed titles playing in other sections are Alba Sotorra's "Commander Arian—A Story of Women, War and Freedom," centering on a 30-year-old commander and her female battalion's efforts to retake an ISIS-controlled city (International Spectrums), Paula Eiselt's "93Queen," the story of a Hasidic lawyer who launches the first all-female ambulance corps in her Orthodox Brooklyn community (World Showcase), and Yuqi Kang's "A Little Wisdom," about a five-year-old boy living in an isolated Buddhist monastery in Nepal (Canadian Spectrum).

The 25th iteration of the fest features a timely Silence Breakers program dedicated to "women speaking up and being heard," according to a press release announcing this year's lineup. The slate includes "'Afghan Cycles,' which tells the story of Afghan women breaking the country's gender barriers by training on the Women's National Cycling Team; 'Netizens,' which profiles women who are fighting back against online harassment; 'Slut or Nut, the Diary of a Rape Trial,' a horrifying story of a sexual assault survivor who resorts to bold activism to challenge rape culture in Canada; 'Nothing Without Us: The Women Who Will End Aids,' a film that follows brave women fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic which disproportionately affects women; 'Yours in Sisterhood,' a revealing look at the progress of feminism through the hundreds of strangers who read and react to 40-year-old letters written to the editors of Ms. Magazine; and 'Time For Ilhan,' about a Muslim Somali-American seeking election to the Minnesota House of Representatives."

"Netizens" is part of the Big Ideas series. The doc's screening will be followed by a discussion with its director, Cynthia Lowen, Feminist Frequency co-founder Anita Sarkeesian, and victims' rights attorney Carrie Goldberg.

"Formidable filmmakers, in unrelenting pursuit of the truth are a hallmark of this year's Hot Docs Festival programming, and Toronto audiences have the chance to explore stories from around the world, and engage with the people who tell them," said Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs. "As we celebrate 25 years of Hot Docs, it's exciting to see that documentary storytelling is as outstanding and outspoken as ever, a vital cultural force in connecting us to our world and to each other."

Women and Hollywood – March 21, 2018 (2 of 2)

As previously announced, “This Is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous” director Barbara Kopple will be honored with the Outstanding Achievement Award at this year’s fest.

Hot Docs runs from April 26 to May 6.

Hot Docs '18: A taste of three world premieres

By Selina Chignall

March 21, 2018

At a press conference announcing the line-up for the 25th Hot Docs International Festival on Tuesday (March 20), *realscreen* caught up with a few of the filmmakers and producers to discuss the docs they're bringing to the fest as world premieres.

Turning up *The Heat*

Among the more than 246 films screening during the festival is Toronto-based filmmaker **Maya Gallus'** *The Heat: A Kitchen Revolution* (pictured, above) which will bow **opening night at the festival** on April 26. In the high stakes and hot-tempered world of restaurant kitchens, it's not easy to climb the ladder. For women, it's even more difficult. But as women take the reins in more of the world's top restaurants, they bring a cultural shift with them that is impacting the predominantly macho space.

Gallus, who heads up Toronto-based Red Queen productions with Justine Pimlott, told *realscreen* that the idea for the new film grew out of **her 2010 documentary** *Dish: Women, Waitressing & the Art of Service* which looks at women working in the service industry.

"After looking at women in the front of the house, I became interested in women in the back of the house – the kitchen," she said.

The director (pictured, below) said when she was shooting the documentary she became fascinated, watching people work and how focused the women were. But she was aware of the need to keep a respectful distance from the occasionally frantic world of food prep.

"The last thing you want is to be in the way or interfere with that process," Gallus said.

With the culturally and politically significant charge of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movement, Gallus believes people are more open now to women-led stories like *The Heat*. The project was named as a Ted Rogers Hot Docs Fund recipient in the round of funding **announced in February**.

Joining the Fan Club

Some people are very passionate about their television shows.

And then there are fan activists – TV advocates who work to save their favorite series from being axed.

Michael Sparaga's 97-minute *United We Fan* takes audiences into the world of fan activists Bjo and John Trimble, who led a letter-writing campaign in the 1960s to save *Star Trek*. From the Sixties to the present day, countless other TV fans have gone to extreme lengths to save their best-loved shows.

Realscreen – March 21, 2018 (2 of 3)

The idea behind Sparaga's latest project started years ago when, at the age of 13, he wrote a letter to NBC to try and save the 1986 short-lived drama series *Crime Story*. The show never came back, but that memory stuck with him. Ever since then, he has kept his eye on different television campaigns. In 2009, when the *Toronto Star* spotlighted a local trying to save the show NBC series *Chuck*, Sparaga said he started researching the topic at length.

What he found is that these fan activists are fighting for more than another season of their show or more episodes.

"They are fighting to keep their group of people who love that show together – and their identity, which is reflected in that show," he said.

During the two years it took to put the doc together, Sparaga, who also produced the doc with Joel Roff, said he had to sift through many fan stories to find the gems. Often, he found that fans were fighting for particular shows because they identified with a character on screen. He said this was very true for the LGBTQ community, which is still underrepresented on television.

"It was eye-opening how important representation is – to see themselves on air," Sparaga noted.

Examining *The Accountant of Auschwitz*

"What would I have done in that position?"

That is the question that Toronto-based director Matthew Shoychet wants audiences to reflect upon after watching *The Accountant of Auschwitz*, making its world premiere at Hot Docs.

In 2015, 94-year old Oscar Gröning, known as the "Accountant of Auschwitz" took the stand in a trial where he was charged with the murder of 300,000 Jews. While the trial in Lüneburg, Germany made headlines around the world, there was much debate around his prosecution. On one side were those who believed Gröning was a witness and therefore complicit, regardless of any perceived duty to follow orders. Others saw no reason to pursue charges of this elderly man.

Producer Ricki Gurwitz said in looking at this case, the goal was not to make a Holocaust film but one that applies a modern perspective in asking what we can learn from the past.

"It was an intellectually complicated film to make," Gurwitz said.

As neither she nor Shoychet was at Gröning's trial, they had to get footage from it and piece it together alongside archival footage.

Realscreen – March 21, 2018 (3 of 3)

“The biggest [production] problem was trying to construct the film,” Shoychet noted. “With so many facts and characters and hours of footage, how do you bring the story through?”

Gurwitz hopes the film will prompt audiences to reexamine how people are prosecuted and what it means to be complicit in a crime.

“Not everything is always so black and white. There is some grey area to explore – and to understand – which helps to understand us as humans,” she said.



VIDEOS CONTENT



Entertainment

What to expect at this year's Hot Docs Festival

Entertainment City's Teri Hart gives us a look into what to expect at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

<https://www.bttoronto.ca/videos/what-to-expect-at-this-years-hot-docs-festival/>

Film New Europe – March 23, 2018

CEE Films Selected for THE CHANGING FACE OF EUROPE at Hot Docs Toronto FEATURED

FNE STAFF 2018-03-23



The Distant Barking of Dogs by Simon Lereng Wilmont

HAMBURG: Docs from Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Kosovo, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are among the ten European documentaries selected by the European Film Promotion (EFP) and Hot Docs – the Canadian International Documentary Festival (26 April - 6 May 2018) to be presented in the new programme THE CHANGING FACE OF EUROPE at Hot Docs, Toronto.

<http://www.filmneweurope.com/news/region/item/116101-cee-films-selected-for-the-changing-face-of-europe-at-hot-docs-toronto>

8 EVENTS HAPPENING IN SPRING THAT YOU NEED TO GO TO FESTIVALS, FASHION SHOWS, AND CONCERTS, OH MY!

By cara icaastro News & Lifestyle, Your Toronto

Spring may be here, but there's still a bite in the air. Although going outside is all we want to do, staying indoors might be a reality at least for a little while! Lucky for you, this time of year is full of events in the city that are calling your name! Take a look at what you can do while saying bye to the winter blahs:

ONE OF A KIND SPRING SHOW

Make sure you head to Toronto's One of A Kind Show this spring! With over 800 artisans showcasing their creations, it'll be impossible not to find something that suites your taste. Go support local artists and show your appreciation for their handmade excellence!

March 28th – April 1st at Enercare Centre

CANADIAN MUSIC WEEK

Enjoy one of the coolest, reoccurring music festivals to hit the city! It's the 36th anniversary and they've pulled out all the stops with some amazing acts joining their roster. The Rural Alberta Advantage, Matt & Kim, Said the Whale, CupcakKe, Slow, and Sloan are just a few of the artists that will be putting on shows at this epic concert!

May 7th – 13th all around the city

SUGARBUSH MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Have an almost month long sugar rush with Sugarbush! There's no limit to what you can do with maple syrup here...you can (and should) put it on everything. Try pure maple lollipops, fresh pancakes doused in the syrup, or just straight up shots of it! We won't judge.

March 10th- April 8th all around the GTA

TORONTO COFFEE AND TEA EXPO

When: April 14 – 15, 2018

Where: 550 Bayview Av (Evergreen Brickworks)

Get caffeine-wasted at this 2 day bevvy expo! Celebrate the talented people behind latte art and say thanks to the best tea brewers, all under one roof. Sip on endless cups of tea and coffee, learn about where your fav brew or herbal blends come from, and receive countless complementary treats. It's the place to be this spring!

April 14th – 15th at Evergreen Brickworks

HOT DOCS CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

Attend North America's largest documentary festival this spring! Hot Docs is gearing up for their 25th anniversary, so chances are it's going to be more unforgettable than ever before. Get lost in their art and watch some of the hundreds of films submitted from people all around the world!

Indie 88 – March 28, 2018 (2 of 2)

April 26th – May 6th at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

TASTEMAKER

Become the ultimate foodie at Tastemaker! This two day event features selected local and national chefs, restaurants, and artisans to inspire foodies through an unparalleled experience! Sample some food combos you never knew existed and learn some tips and tricks from some of the world's finest chefs.

May 18th – 19th at Evergreen Brickworks

COLOUR ME RAD

Hopefully the weather cooperates by this time! Walk or run your way into spring with Color Me Rad! Take on this 5K adventure with your friends and have an experience like no other. Make sure to wear white so you can come home with a whole new outfit!

May 12th at Downsview Park

FASHION ART TORONTO

Get ready for one of the most visually appealing festivals you'll ever see! Fashion Art Toronto is a 5-day expo filled with experimental, multi-sensory, art-influenced fashion presentations including performances, art installations, photography and short films. Take a look and see what the fashion world is up to!

April 17th – 21st at Daniels Spectrum

Screen Anarchy – March 29, 2018 (1 of 2)

March 29, 1:00 pm

Hot Docs 2018: THE ARTIST & THE PERVERT, North American Trailer Debut

Andrew Mack

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR; TORONTO, CANADA ([@MACK_SANARCHY](#))

Our attention turns to the upcoming Hot Docs Film Festival here in Toronto in April. Of the many films that will raise eyebrows and questions the film **The Artist & The Pervert** by directors Beatrice Behn and René Gebhardt is sure to be one. Their documentary about the marriage between composer Georg Friedrich Haas and kink expert Mollena Williams-Haas will have its North American premiere at the festival and Screen Anarchy is pleased to debut the North American trailer.

Separating an artist's life and work has always been an issue. But when Georg Friedrich Haas – “the most important living composer,” according to Classic Voice Magazine – and his wife Mollena, a renowned kink expert/storyteller, gave a frank interview to the New York Times, some seemed to lose their minds.

Up-front and comfortable, they “came out” about their master-slave BDSM relationship – a personal choice fraught with sexual & gender politics to the outside world.

According to their critics the fiercely-independent Mollena Williams-Haas was a woman subjugating herself to the desires of a man in a patriarchal society. Worse, she was an African-American taking on the “slave” role in the equation.

Their story “should have been left in the dark recesses of their plantation bedroom where it belongs.” Even some in the music world suggested Haas’ work would now always be associated with kink.

*Beatrice Behn and René Gebhardt’s documentary **The Artist & the Pervert** reveals touching truths about the couple, who indeed, have taken their personal life and incorporated it into their work under the world’s glare.*

There is a link to the festival page below where you can purchase your tickets to see **The Artist & The Pervert**.

<http://screenanarchy.com/2018/03/hot-docs-2018-the-artist-the-pervert-north-american-trailer.html>

Female chefs in the spotlight on opening night of Hot Docs

Girl power will be front and centre at Hot Docs this year as the fest tackles female representation in film, the workplace and the world.

Opening night will see the world premiere of Maya Gallus' *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*.

The Canadian filmmaker takes viewers inside the the kitchens of the world's top female chefs.

Meanwhile, the Silence Breakers program features stories of brave women breaking down gender barriers, fighting disease and challenging themselves and cultural stereotypes. In total, half the works in the 2018 Hot Docs lineup are by female filmmakers.

Other program highlights include an expanded DocX program (with virtual reality and interactive experiences), and special 25th anniversary treats.

One you won't want to miss is a free IMAX screening at the Ontario Place Cinesphere of The Trolley, which showcases Toronto as one of the only cities in North America to have kept up an extensive streetcar network.

The festival runs from April 26 to May 6. Tickets go on sale to the general public on March 27 at 11 a.m.

10 MUST-SEE DOCUMENTARIES AT THE HOT DOCS FILM FESTIVAL

From Paris Hilton to dating in Iran, there's something for everyone

by [Veronica Saroli](#)

April 02, 2018

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, otherwise known as Hot Docs, is kicking off on April 26 with a slew of must-see films. But, the most exciting part about the 11-day-long festival is its total gender parity of filmmakers [applause, snaps, hoorays and more]. This year's lineup is filled with documentaries that will appeal to fashion-watchers and anyone searching for serious inspiration from myriad amazing women. Without further ado, here are a few documentaries to see during Hot Docs 2018.

The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution

The festival's opening-night doc follows female chefs toppling the notoriously male-dominated environment of upper-echelon cuisine. Award-winning Canadian filmmaker Maya Gallus chats with seven Toronto and international chefs for an empowering look at the next gen of kick-ass female chefs. Dinner is *served*.

Yellow is Forbidden

Learn more about Guo Pei, the woman who made Rihanna's golden-yellow gown for the 2015 [Met Gala](#). China's most famous couturier, whose gowns can take up to 50,000 hours to make, is reviving the craftsmanship of clothes lost under decades of Communist rule. Watch to see why Pei's name belongs alongside those of Dior, Valentino and Chanel.

MATANGI / MAYA / M.I.A.

Everyone can sing the chorus to M.I.A.'s boisterous hit "Paper Planes," but few know the woman behind the song. M.I.A.'s activism and defiant spirit is showcased through concert footage, interviews and her own videos. Get the story from her rise from a teenage Sri Lankan immigrant in London to sitting at the top of the music charts. M.I.A. will attend the screening on May 2.

Love, Gilda

The Kit – April 2, 2018 (2 of 3)

Thirty years after Gilda Radner left SNL, her energetic skits still get viewers in stitches. Amy Poehler, Melissa McCarthy, Maya Rudolph and Bill Hader share their thoughts on the late comedian, who died of ovarian cancer in 1989. (“How am I going to make cancer funny?” she once wrote.) Radner’s newly discovered audio diaries are also featured in the documentary.

McQueen

This documentary on the late designer Alexander McQueen is getting its international premiere at the Toronto festival. Archival footage and interviews with McQueen’s closest companions creates a fuller portrait of the visionary and misunderstood creative who committed suicide in 2010.

Tiny Shoulders: Rethinking Barbie

It’s never been a tougher time to be Barbie, or more accurately, to be the people behind the doll. Following Project Dawn, Barbie’s 2016 redesign, everyone from Gloria Steinem to Roxane Gay to Barbie’s all-female management team sound off on the role of the figure in today’s society.

Commander Arian — A Story of Women, War and Freedom

Commander Arian runs a female battalion that’s a part of the Kurdish resistance’s fierce YPJ (Women’s Protection Unit). The edge-of-your-seat doc follows a group of female soldiers as they clash with ISIS, but off the battlefield, they’re fighting for emancipation.

I Used To Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story

Three generations of boyband fandom converge for a portrait of the ways in which boybands like One Direction, the Backstreet Boys and The Beatles shape women’s relationships to themselves and their friends. It’s about idol worship taken to the extreme, and we’ve all definitely been there.

Barbara Rubin and the Exploding NY Underground

Experimental filmmaker Barbara Rubin connected icons of the 1960s like Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground, and her name is tied to Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg. Despite breaking through the male-dominated realms of film, art and religion, not much is known about the trailblazer who died at just 35 under mysterious circumstances.

The Kit – April 2, 2018 (3 of 3)

The Broker

If you thought dating was hard, take a peek into the bustling world of dating agencies in Iran. The Broker is a humorous and heartfelt look at the manager and workers of an Iranian dating

agency as they try and find the right gent for their clients. Safe to say, dating with a broker looks nothing like the apps used today; this film has been dubbed “tragicomic.”

The American Meme

Social media stars Paris Hilton, DJ Khaled, The Fat Jew, Brittany Furlan and the Slut Whisperer comment and demonstrate the somewhat twisted world of being Instafamous. Need we say more than Paris Hilton?

Hot Docs: Interview with “The Trolley” filmmaker Stephen Low

April 4, 2018 Sonya Davidson Arts, Film

Stephen Low has spent three decades producing large-format cinema experiences. His latest, ***The Trolley***, will debut at this year’s Hot Docs Film Festival as a Special Presentation. The film captures a stunning “how things work” approach to one of the world’s most powerful means of transportation. This film is considered “a love letter” to the moving wonder and follows the extraordinary ride from the 19th century beginnings to today and all its complexities. We particularly have this documentary on our list as Toronto’s system remains as one of a few cities in North America that still functions on an extensive streetcar network and is featured in the film. ***The Trolley*** will have its World Premiere at the **Hot Docs Film Festival** (April 26 to May 6, 2018) with a free screening on Saturday, May 5th at the Cinesphere, Ontario Place at 3 pm. Tickets must be reserved in advance.

We had a chance to chat with filmmaker Stephen Low recently about this incredible film and thoughts on our transit system...

What’s your favourite streetcar route in Toronto?

I like King Street because it’s among the most interesting and much faster and more effective now that the cars are mostly out of the way.

Where do you prefer to sit?

I like to sit all over the place and even walk around during the journey. I like to stretch my legs and often don’t sit at all.

Why do you think Torontonians have a love/hate relationship with public transit? Do other cosmopolitan cities embrace their public transit systems better?

I think Toronto and indeed all Canadian cities are still car dominated long after automobiles have become dangerous, wasteful and ineffective in large cities all over the world. Governments love cars because of the stupendous taxes generated from fuel, sales taxes, licensing and on and on. And they seem not to care if people can’t get to work.

What inspired you to create this documentary?

A number of politicians were fond of saying that “the streetcars are always getting in the way” and other such nonsense, oblivious to the fact that they carry a hundred times more people (and now hundreds of times more people) than a few SUV jerks blocking them at every intersection.

What kind of democracy favours a handful of private motorists over hundreds of people trying to get home using public transit? It’s even more obscene when you consider that electric rail is potentially fossil free. (and already is fossil free in many cities around the world.) Calgary’s light rail is powered by wind mills— they call it “riding the wind!”

What have you learned from visiting the various trolley systems around the world?

Great public transit makes possible cleaner, quieter, safer, more affordable cities with far more public space. It’s quite simply a better way to live. People are thinner and healthier too and probably more social. Many cities grass over their rail lines improving drainage, acoustics, and aesthetics too.

Do you have a prestocard?

I don’t have one because I’m not currently living in Toronto. But when I come back I will certainly get one.

Any thoughts on the hotly debated King Street Pilot Project?

It works great. I think it’s just the first step in getting cars completely out of the way of emission free rail transit. Private cars were always the ones in the way— an obscenity that should have never been allowed in the first place.

Most of the worlds people seek to live in cities. It’s imperative that we provide highly efficient, clean zero emission transportation for these billions of people.

If we stupidly cling to bad ideas like fossil producing automotive gridlock we’re doomed. It’s really that simple.

<https://torontoguardian.com/2018/04/hot-docs-stephen-low-the-trolley/>

Netflix's 'Mercury 13' Trailer: These Women Trained to Be Astronauts But Never Saw Space — Watch

Amazon will revisit the same chapter of history for an upcoming scripted miniseries.

Jenna Marotta

Apr 9, 2018 5:41 pm

Netflix will attempt to preempt Amazon's planned narrative miniseries on a group of Kennedy-era, aspiring female astronauts — "Mercury 13" — with a documentary of the same name. The Netflix offering features interviews with pilots who underwent physical and psychological testing in 1961 as part of a privately-funded secret program. The program was not NASA sanctioned, however, and opposition from orbit-bound John Glenn and others prevented the women's training from being recognized as legitimate.

While Netflix's project has flown mostly under the radar, Deadline reported in November that "The Post" co-writer Liz Hannah would adapt Martha Ackmann's 2003 memoir, "The Mercury 13: The Untold Story of Thirteen American Women and the Dream of Space Flight" for its rival streaming service. Hannah will be the Pascal Pictures-produced Amazon series' showrunner and executive producer. With her Freckle Films banner, Oscar-nominated actress Jessica Chastain was once slated to produce yet another Mercury 13 account, for ITV Studios America.

Thirteen of 20 women successfully completed the tasks required of male astronauts (including Glenn) who participated in Mercury Seven spaceflights between May 1961 and 1963. Even though some of the women outperformed their male counterparts, prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, they were unable to sway Congressional public hearing audiences that they were the victims of sexual discrimination. Most of the Mercury Seven were previously test pilots for military jets, an opportunity then not available to women, who were still prohibited from attending Air Force training schools.

Indie Wire – April 9, 2018 (2 of 2)

Netflix's "Mercury 13" was directed by Brits David Sington and Heather Walsh, who collaborated a decade ago on the Science Channel's docuseries "Moon Machines." Borrowing from archival footage of man's first lunar walk, NASA's control room, and the picket lines of second-wave feminism, this documentary premiered Sunday at San Francisco International Film Festival. Another screening will take place later this spring at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

Each project follow the success of 20th Century Fox's box office hit and 2017 Best Picture nominee "Hidden Figures," another long-overlooked story about women whose help was enlisted during the Space Race. Russia bested the United States in sending the first person (1961) and first woman (1963) into space, but the first footsteps on the moon belonged to American Neil Armstrong (1969). He will be the subject of his own film later this year, "First Man," the re-teaming of "La La Land" veterans Damien Chazelle and Ryan Gosling.

5 Ways To Celebrate Spring In Toronto

By Correspondent Gizelle Lau

APRIL 12, 2018



The Art Gallery of Ontario. Credit: Tourism Toronto

With warm weather just around the corner, [Toronto](#) is itching for locals and visitors to come out of hibernation to make the most of the climbing temperatures. From film festivals to secluded spa treatments, here are a handful of exciting events and experiences taking place this spring in the city.

Experience Infinity

Contemporary Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's internationally lauded "[Infinity Mirrors](#)" exhibition is on display in Toronto until May 27 at the Art Gallery of Ontario. The show, along with 90 other works by Kusama, features six immersive rooms. The landscapes challenge you to "experience infinity" in multi-reflective installations that promise to leave you mesmerized. These otherworldly works also make great backdrops for one-of-a-kind Instagrammable selfies.

Turn your art-fueled adventure into a weekend escape for two with a stay at Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star [Shangri-La Hotel, Toronto](#) just a couple blocks away from the gallery. The stylish property's [Romanic Getaway in Toronto](#) package pulls out all the stops with chocolate and champagne upon arrival, breakfast for two at [Bosk](#), a \$100 spa credit and the ultimate personal shopping experience at Saks Fifth Avenue.

Get a Global Perspective

Experience North America's largest documentary film festival during [Hot Docs](#), an 11-day celebration of all things film. From April 26 to May 6, the city will be overrun with panels, workshops and screenings of more than 200 cutting-edge documentaries from Canada and around the globe.

Among the highly anticipated showings will be the annual "Made In" program that will present works from Mexican filmmakers this year. Another special production will be "The Changing Face of Europe." In a first-time collaboration with European Film

Forbes Travel Guide – April 12, 2018 (2 of 3)

Promotion, this brand-new series will showcase 10 documentaries from rising filmmakers across the continent, each highlighting issues affecting Europe today.



The Adelaide Hotel's Infinity Lap Pool. *Credit: The Adelaide Hotel, Toronto*

Indulge in a Secluded Spa Retreat

After a long day of traversing the city, rest your head in sumptuous style at The Adelaide Hotel, Toronto, a property that's situated in the heart of downtown. Enjoy all that the upscale address has to offer right now with the extra-exclusive Midnight at the Spa experience. When you book this ultra-luxe offering, you and your special someone will enjoy complete privacy in the 15,000-square-foot, two-story spa for an entire evening, when it will be off-limits to everyone but you.

The pampering begins with a two-hour couples retreat: an invigorating exfoliation followed by a 90-minute side-by-side massage with hot stones for deep muscle relaxation. Then, partake in a candlelit midnight swim overlooking Toronto's skyline from the spa's infinity-edge saltwater pool. Decadent bites, custom music and floating rose petals help complete the amorous evening.

Enjoy the Flavors of Peru

Opened at the end of February, Mira honors the bold and vibrant flavors of Peruvian cuisine. Located on Wellington Street in the trendy King West neighborhood, the restaurant is the brainchild of Iconink, the same team behind some of Toronto's other popular international eateries, including Eastern Mediterranean restaurant Byblos and Spanish-themed Patria.

With a quirky entrance marked by a neon llama, this stylish spot features Latin American-style shareable plates, such as Andean popcorn, tuna ceviche and Peruvian street-style *antichuchos* (barbecue skewers) with a vibrant, colorful atmosphere to match. Cozy up to the bar to try a few Pisco cocktails — you can't go wrong with the traditional sour variation — because one, after all, is never enough.



High Park. *Credit: The Adelaide Hotel, Toronto*

Head Outside

A highlight of springtime in Toronto, cherry blossom season provides an excellent excuse to hit the city's green spaces. Over in the West End, High Park is a favorite spot for locals to take in the beautiful blooms, which usually reach their peak from late April to early May.

Like in Japan, the *hanami* — the tradition of celebrating spring and its subsequent blooms — will see city-dwellers and visitors alike enjoying a picnic and the rising temperatures under the pink-hued trees.

10 POWERFUL, TIMELY, WEIRD & WONDERFUL FILMS YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT AT HOT DOCS 2018

AUTHOR ERIN PEHLIVAN
POSTED ON APRIL 12, 2018

The 25th year of the Hot Docs International Documentary Festival kicks off April 26 and runs until May 6. As a former Hot Docs volunteer and employee, I feel blessed to live in Toronto and have the ability to peek into the lives of others through this film fest. Hot Docs exposes us to different corners of the globe, teaching us that the world is bigger than ourselves; it nudges us to think about other perspectives, languages and ways of being. For that, I feel so grateful.

This year's lineup is one of the best in recent memory, and it was no surprise when I learned this schedule marks the first time gender parity has been achieved at the festival, meaning half of the participating filmmakers are women. It hasn't been easy narrowing down our faves this year, but here's our hot take on the top films for #HotDocs25.

MATANGI / MAYA / M.I.A

"Two decades' worth of personal footage capture the complex evolution of M.I.A., the musician and social justice activist whose outspoken rhymes tore up the charts, stoked political fires and captivated fans and critics worldwide." – Gabor Petic

Why we want to see it: This might be the year's most anticipated music doc for fierce females (and those who love them). The Sri Lankan London-based artist always has something pointed to say, and we can't wait to see what she's up to next as she communicates her message with pop, style and innovation. This film is part of the Big Ideas series, where M.I.A will appear for an interview in Toronto.

I Used To Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story

"From the Beatles to the Backstreet Boys, One Direction to Take That, three generations of zealous boyband fans reflect on the objects of their obsessions and explore how the thrills,

She Does The City – April 12, 2018 (2 of 5)

fantasies and roller-coaster emotions of fandom have changed and challenged their lives.” – Angie Driscoll

Why we want to see it: If you grew up in the 1990s, this one’s sure to resonate, but we love that it spans generations. We imagine we’ll be feeling pretty nostalgic at this screening as we watch fandom change throughout the ages and learn about the deeper and darker sides of it along the way.

Shirkers

“A young writer from Singapore shoots the country’s first indie road movie with her mysterious American mentor, who then disappears—with all the footage. Decades later, the reels resurface, reopening the mysteries of the film that could have been.” – Artscapes

Why we want to see it: *Shirkers* was supposed to be a 1990s teen girl cult film from Singapore. And then all the footage disappeared. Whaaat? We’re sold. Need to know what happened, ASAP. The mysterious, zany indie film is already a hit: it won the World Cinema Documentary category at Sundance and has supposedly been picked up by Netflix.

Rush Hour

“Three long-distance commuters in Los Angeles, Istanbul and Mexico City question their quality of life and reflect on the hours they’ve lost as they traverse congested highways and crowded subways on their way to and from work.” – Heather Haynes

Why we want to see it: This doc on living and commuting in megacities might have you either rethinking your disdain for the TTC or reinforcing it. We suspect hints of existential disparity and heaps of frustration. By the end, you’ll be asking critical questions about how we can improve urban design, traffic and transit for everybody.

The Return

“Two Danish-Korean adoptees return to their birthplaces, searching for their mothers, their identities and their destinies in a disorienting emotional journey that blurs fact and fiction.” – Angie Driscoll

She Does The City – April 12, 2018 (3 of 5)

Why we want to see it: Because the trailer is striking, contemporary and otherworldly. Because, did you even know that documentaries can use fictional elements, scripted scenes and performances to make a story come to life? Because whether or not you were adopted, you'll relate to the story of these characters who feel frustrated not knowing where they belong, as they navigate between two cultures, longing for something they don't know how to define.

Don't Be Nice

"As an upstart slam poetry team from NYC prepares for national championships, their coach challenges them to take risks and write from the soul. Can daring poems about racism, homophobia and cultural appropriation compete with crowd-pleasers for the title?" – Angie Driscoll

Why we want to see it: It'll be interesting to see how the writing process works for these twenty-somethings who are pushed to communicate from a place of vulnerability—never fun or easy! But worth it. Given the current political climate, this doc is timely and makes a statement in a creative way. We reckon it'll inspire you to get your pens and notebooks out and start Googling the next writer's workshop.

A Woman Captured

"Overworked, starved and mistreated, a middle-aged woman has been trapped in domestic slavery for over a decade by an affluent Hungarian family—but as trust grows between her and the filmmaker, she makes a heroic bid for freedom." – Heather Haynes

Why we want to see it: The fact that this story is non-fiction is mind-blowing, and works like this consistently leave us in awe of the documentary filmmaking process. Director Bernadett

Tuza-Ritter masterfully inserts herself in the home and in the story of Marish, perhaps even helping her make an exit to find her eighteen-year-old runaway daughter. But will Marish actually escape? We are dying to find out.

She Does The City – April 12, 2018 (4 of 5)

Golden Dawn Girls

“When the notorious leader of Greece’s right-wing, ultranationalist Golden Dawn Party is thrown behind bars, his daughter, wife and mother—all eloquent, unflappable and ruthless—take the reins and reveal their true colours through a disturbing series of interviews.” – Heather Haynes

Why we want to see it: This one looks like it’s going to be very dramatic. We’re looking forward to seeing how filmmaker Håvard Bustnes gains access to this family and documents their pre-election plans, all while discovering something even more uncomfortable about what’s happening behind the scenes. We’re sure *Golden Dawn Girls* will have us doing some deep thinking as we discover how eerily familiar politics can be, even across the globe.

The Silence Breakers Program

This year’s special program, presented in partnership with Oxfam Canada, features films about women speaking up and being heard. The whole program is brilliantly curated and highly recommended, but these two films stood out to us.

Netizens

“Systematically silenced and terrorized by anonymous harassers, three women—among the many millions for whom the internet is a battleground—attempt to seek justice and spread awareness, taking back their power and their lives in the process.” – Heather Haynes

Why we want to see it: Digital abuse and online harassment have destroyed the lives of countless women. Now, Anita Sarkeesian, Tina Reine and Carrie Goldberg are working together to change Internet policy and make it a safer place. Lowen, Sarkeesian and Goldberg will be in attendance at the [Big Ideas](#) screening of the film. If you like Internet docs, also check out *The Cleaners*, which tells a shady story of Internet content moderators and censorship.

Afghan Cycles

“Young Afghan women challenge gender and cultural barriers as they train with the Women’s National Cycling Team. Using the bicycle as a literal and metaphorical vehicle for freedom, they fight for empowerment and social change at the risk of their own lives.” – Heather Haynes

She Does The City – April 12, 2018 (5 of 5)

Why we want to see it: Historically, the bicycle has been a revolutionary vehicle for change for women around the world, but will it help them find autonomy in the city of Bamiyan? This doc highlights the challenges of feminism in the Middle East, but it also gives us hope that things are slowly changing.

Find out more information on #HotDocs25 screening dates, times and more at hotdocs.ca. Check out the [RUSH](#) list to see which advanced screenings have already sold out and how to get same-day tickets. Students with valid ID and seniors (60+) can get free admission to films that start before 5 p.m. Be sure to pick up your tickets at the venue box office on the day of the screening, subject to availability.

Ten must-see films about politics at Hot Docs

From Donald Trump and the alt-right movement to police brutality and cyber-bullying, these much-anticipated films promise to examine hot-button issues from the ground up

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 15, 2018

7:22 PM



My War

In an era where literally everything is political, these Hot Docs titles promise to examine hot-button issues from the ground up. Whether you agree with their conclusions, well, that's up to you. The festival runs April 26 to May 6. Get tickets [here](#).

ACTIVE MEASURES

One of several films at this year's festival to explore the hacking of America's 2016 election, Jack Bryan's doc investigates the nuts and bolts of Russia's interference by tracing Vladimir Putin's tactics through their recent applications in Ukraine, Georgia and Estonia – and the wholly ineffectual international response. We may be screwed, but at least we can understand the hows and whys of it.

April 30, 9 pm, Isabel Bader; May 2, 3:45 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 4, 6:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

ALT-RIGHT: AGE OF RAGE

Donald Trump's presidency has emboldened the worst of America – the fascists, the racists, the idiots yearning to discriminate freely. Adam Bhala Lough, director of *Bomb The System* and *The New Radical*, tags along with white-supremacist poster boy Richard Spencer to see exactly why people find his message so appealing.

April 27, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs; April 28, 1:15 pm, Isabel Bader; May 4, 3:45 pm, Hot Docs

THE BLUE WALL

Laquan McDonald was 17 when he was shot 16 times by Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke in 2014 – another Black kid killed by a white cop. It took nearly a year for video evidence

NOW Magazine – April 15, 2018 (2 of 3)

to surface that made it a murder case – no thanks to the efforts of the Chicago PD and their enablers in city government. Director Rick Rowley (*Dirty Wars*) explores both the institutional mindset that denies the truth of these shootings, and the citizen movements determined to bring that truth to light.

May 1, 9 pm, Isabel Bader; May 2, 12:30 pm, Hart House; May 3, 9 pm, Scotiabank 3

THE FEELING OF BEING WATCHED

In the post-9/11, Patriot Act era, it wouldn't be particularly surprising to learn that a largely Arab-American suburb of Chicago would be the target of a massive, questionably legal FBI surveillance operation. But as filmmaker Assia Boundaoui demonstrates, Operation Vulgar Betrayal was underway in her neighbourhood well before America decided to compromise its soul for the illusion of security. And now she's made a movie about it.

April 26, 8:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; April 27, 12:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 4, 9:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

AMAL

Mohamed Siam's documentary looks at the fallout of the Arab Spring by following one of the people who was there: Amal, an Egyptian girl who was just 14 when Tahrir Square galvanized her nation in 2011. Over six years, Siam watches Amal's revolutionary consciousness develop and change while her country undergoes a similar shift in perspective... though they may end up in very different places.

April 29, 6:45 pm, Isabel Bader; April 30, 3:30 pm, Isabel Bader; May 6, 10:15 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

GOLDEN DAWN GIRLS

Håvard Bustnes's look at the attempts of three Greek women to rebuild their right-wing party when its (male) leadership is convicted of organized-crime charges promises a very different look at the far-right landscape of European politics – mostly because the Norwegian documentarian kept his cameras rolling after his subjects called "cut."

May 1, 8:30 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 3, 12:45 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 6, 12:45 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

MY WAR

Every now and then, we hear about a Westerner who travels to the Middle East and joins a terrorist network. Julian Fréchette's doc looks at people who've made a different choice – packing up and heading across the ocean to join the fight against ISIS. Politics doesn't get any more personal than that.

April 29, 6 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 3; May 1, 12:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; May 3, 3:30 pm, Scotiabank 3

NOW Magazine – April 15, 2018 (3 of 3)

NETIZENS

Gamergate was just one facet of an ugly reality: the anonymity of the internet allows people to be monstrous assholes, and women bear the brunt of their weaponized hatred and cruelty. Cynthia Lowen, director of the powerful doc *Bully*, tackles the issue through the stories of people like Anita Sarkeesian, who'll be appearing with her at the Scotiabank Big Ideas screening April 29.

April 29, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs; April 30, 10 am, Isabel Bader; May 5, 10 am, Hot Docs

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Okay, so Russia's interference probably got Donald Trump elected President. But how do ordinary Russians feel about that? Maxim Pozdorovkin's collage documentary revisits the 2016 race entirely through news broadcasts and stock footage to show us exactly how a vapid rage monster was repackaged as a charismatic political juggernaut. Whee.

May 1, 9 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 3, 10 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 5, 12:45 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

THE TRIAL

Maria Augusta Ramos specializes in documentaries about the Brazilian justice system, so she was ideally placed to make a movie about the impeachment and removal of her nation's president, Dilma Rousseff, on charges of criminal administrative misconduct. Was this a political coup, as Rousseff's supporters claimed, or a genuine case of corruption? We're about to find out.

April 29, 8:45 pm, Hart House; May 1, 11:45 am, Hart House; May 6, 6 pm, Isabel Bader

Eight Hot Docs movies coming out after the festival

If you can't score tickets to these films at Hot Docs, fear not – catch them in theatres or online in the coming months

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

APRIL 16, 2018

11:00 AM



Shirkers

1. SHIRKERS

As a teenager in Singapore, filmmaker and novelist Sandi Tan shot a road movie with the support of American teacher George Cardona – only to see her dreams dashed when he disappeared and took the 16mm film with him. Years later, Tan started receiving pieces of the film in the mail, inspiring her to make this part mystery, part cinematic memoir. Hot Docs will likely be your only chance to experience it on the big screen – Netflix bought *Shirkers* following its well-received world premiere at Sundance. Also there's a local connection: Toronto's Iris Ng is the doc's cinematographer.

April 27, 9:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; April 28, 3:45 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; May 5, 2:45 pm, Scotiabank 3

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2. THE FOURTH ESTATE

What Happened, Miss Simone? director Liz Garbus scored intimate access to the New York Times' White House correspondents during the first year of Trump's presidency for this four-part doc series that will air on streaming platform Crave TV on May 27. Hot Docs will screen a 90-minute version of The Fourth Estate, and Garbus will be in Toronto for the sold-out screening at Isabel Bader Theatre on April 30.

April 30, 6 pm, Isabel Bader; May 1, 12:45 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 5, 10:30 am, Isabel Bader

3. THE OSLO DIARIES

Directors Mor Loushy (Censored Voices) and Daniel Sivan use reenactments, interviews with key players and archival material to piece together what happened during the failed Mideast peace talks of the 90s. The Canadian co-produced film also includes the final on-camera interview with former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres. HBO picked up the film and will air it in late summer to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Oslo Accords.

May 1, 9 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 2, 12:30 pm, Isabel Bader

4. MERCURY 13

David Sington and Heather Walsh's doc will already be **available on Netflix** by the time it screens at Hot Docs. Similar to the Hollywood hit Hidden Figures, the film tells the story of women involved in NASA's space program in the 60s. It's about 13 women who secretly tested for spaceflight in 1961 and passed – only to be denied the chance to blast off because of their gender.

April 27, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs; April 28, 10:45 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 5, 6:30 pm, Isabel Bader; May 6, 5:45 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

5. WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

If you can't wait for the June 8 theatrical release to cry your way through this doc about iconic American children's entertainer Mr. Rogers, you can do so with the director in attendance at Hot

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Docs. Oscar winner Morgan Neville will be on hand at the festival for the April 28 Big Ideas event and, yes, that screening is sold out.

April 28, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs; April 29, 1 pm, Hot Docs; May 6, 12:45 pm, Hot Docs

6. RECOVERY BOYS

Director Elaine McMillion Sheldon's look at the opioid epidemic in West Virginia, **Heroin(e)**, scored a best documentary short subject Oscar nomination earlier this year. Her follow-up is a feature-length film about a similar subject. It follows three men as they attempt to re-integrate into society after coming out of a drug rehab program. The film is world premiering at Hot Docs and will be available on Netflix later in the year.

May 1, 6:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 3, 10:30 am, Isabel Bader; May 4, 9:30 pm, Isabel Bader

7. THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS

One of the buzziest films to debut at Sundance was Tim Wardle's film about three complete strangers who, in 1980, accidentally met and realized they are identical triplets separated at birth. The brothers became media darlings, but the story has several twists and turns that are apparently sensational enough to earn the film a theatrical run. It opens in Toronto cinemas this July.

April 26, 6:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; April 27, 1:30 pm, Scotiabank 4

8. MCQUEEN

A 2011 museum show devoted to late British fashion designer Alexander McQueen was wildly popular when it debuted at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2011. So it's a no-brainer that influential McQueen, who took his own life following the death of his mother in 2010, would make for an interesting documentary subject. Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui's film promises to deliver rare archival footage and interviews with members of the designer's inner circle. If you can't make the Hot Docs screenings, the film opens theatrically in late July.

April 28, 9:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; April 29, 2:30 pm, Hart House; May 6, 9 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2 <https://nowtoronto.com/movies/features/hot-docs-festival-movies-getting-theatrical-releases-2018/>

Hot Docs Programmers' Picks: Part 1

Posted on April 16th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



The Trial

Courtesy Hot Docs

By Pat Mullen

The countdown is on! [Hot Docs](#) quickly approaches with things kicking off April 26th. Where to begin navigating the 230-odd films in the festival? So many stories, so many worthy causes, so many fresh voices—but so little time.

Fortunately, the programmers at Hot Docs have compiled their picks into handy videos to guide festival goers through the line-up. With 11 days of documentaries screening from morning 'til midnight, you can be guaranteed to find a doc that speaks to whatever mood you're feeling or whichever corner of the world you feel like visiting at any given moment of the day. From the coolness of Bill Murray to the Machiavellian misogyny of Brazilian politics to the novelty of boyband fandom, the team has you covered.

The biggies: the films programmers can't stop talking about.

The Hot Docs team says that they couldn't shut their mouths about *Bill Murray: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man* ("so unexpectedly inspiring"), the Canadian doc *Letter from Masanjia* ("I was on the edge of my seat"), and *Over the Limit* ("an absolutely remarkable behind the scenes look"), among others.

The game changers: Which Film Changed Your Mind?

Shane Smith, head honcho of the Hot Docs programming team, taps Brazilian doc *The Trial*, hot off its Berlin premiere, for challenging his perception of impeached president Dilma Rousseff, while Ravi Srinivasan says that *Maj Doris* changed his idea of what a person could accomplish in his or her golden years with its portrait of an aging Sami artist. Aisha Jamal gives a shout-out to the fun Canadian flick *United We Fan* for delivering subjects who are far more than TV geeks: they have real connections to the characters on the shows they're trying to save.

Lighten Up: Which Films Made 'em Laugh Out Loud?

Get ready to LOL with *Bathtubs Over Broadway*! We 100% endorse Myorcia Watamaniuk's claim that if this movie doesn't make you laugh, you should "consult a physician because you're dead inside." Great docs don't need to be heavy ones.

Stay tuned for more recommendations!

Trailer Watch: Return to Steubenville, Ohio in Disturbing “Roll Red Roll”

BY Laura Berger April 16, 2018

“Is this football town putting its daughters at risk by protecting its sons in a situation like this?” asks one of the characters in “Roll Red Roll,” an upcoming documentary exploring the crime that put Steubenville, Ohio in national headlines. Nancy Schwartzman’s feature investigates how peer pressure, misogyny, and sports machismo factored into the rape of a young woman and its aftermath.

“Roll Red Roll” is a brutal reminder of what one character describes as “the complete lack of empathy” shown towards the assaulted teen. We see hateful tweets making light of the crime and the girl whose life it changed. And it wasn’t just her classmates who let her down.

“If teachers knew about it, if coaches knew about it, if the principal knew about it, if parents knew about it, why was nothing done about that?” a woman investigating the crime asks.

As Schwartzman explained in a soon-to-be published interview with us, “The film provides an opportunity to look at a regular American town. We are asking teenagers to ‘know better’ but the adults in their lives aren’t modeling better behavior. There were school administrators and teachers that heard rumors, and there were coaches who did nothing, or defended players without asking the tough questions,” she said. “And by doing nothing, and not taking it seriously, they were enabling it—excusing and justifying it, or looking the other way. This situation underscores the need for responsibility and for us to behave as friends, parents, family members, fellow classmates, teachers, school administrators, coaches, and everyone in our communities to make sure that we believe survivors, we investigate carefully, and this behavior stops.”

“Roll Red Roll” premieres at Tribeca Film Festival on April 22. It’ll also screen at Hot Docs later this month.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/trailer-watch-return-to-steubenville-ohio-in-disturbing-roll-red-roll-fd845737a06e/?gi=40794b385f83>

Twenty-five facts about Hot Docs' first 25 years

A look back at the landmark moments and films on festival's quarter-century anniversary

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 17, 2018

6:00 AM



Clockwise from top left: seminal documentaries Aileen Wuornos: The Selling Of A Serial Killer, Hoop Dreams, O.J.: Made In America and Grizzly Man have all played at Hot Docs.

HOT DOCS CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL at various venues. April 26-May 6. \$17-\$24, passes \$99-\$359, free daytime screenings (before 5 pm) for stu/srs. hotdocs.ca.

Happy birthday, Hot Docs! The Canadian International Documentary Festival turns 25 this year, and we've lined up a little list of key moments over the years.

1. The first Hot Docs festival was held in February, 1994 – a big ask of Toronto audiences, but one we were ready for. The opening night film, André Mathieu, *Musicien*, screened at the Bloor Cinema; the other 20 titles (including Nick Broomfield's *Aileen Wuornos: The Selling Of A Serial Killer*) were shown at the AGO's Jackman Hall auditorium and the now-defunct NFB screening room at Richmond and John.
2. Hot Docs 1995 was slightly larger (29 films!) but still consisted largely of films harvested from other festivals – like Steve James's *Hoop Dreams*, which had made its Toronto debut at TIFF the previous fall. Still a February festival, too, which was just mean.

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3. The 1996 edition moved to March (and to Yorkville's Cumberland Cinemas), offering a much more ambitious agenda: 52 films in all, and a push to make Toronto a magnet city for documentaries with the formation of the Industry Centre for workshops, conferences and networking.

4. For the 1997 festival – primarily situated at the Carlton Cinema, with some screenings at the Metropolitan Hotel – the number of documentaries programmed jumped to 97 (including Danièle Lacourse and Yvan Patry's prize-winning Rwanda study *Chronicle Of A Genocide Foretold*). It was the biggest slate the festival would have for a while.

5. The 1998 festival screened 69 docs, opening with Barbara Kopple's *Wild Man Blues*, a film about Woody Allen's European tour. (Kopple is back at the festival this year to receive its outstanding achievement award; *Wild Man Blues* is not among the films screening in a retrospective program.)

6. That outstanding achievement award? It used to be called the lifetime achievement award, and the first one was handed out in 1998 to Toronto documentary legend Allan King (*Warrendale, A Married Couple*).

7. For its 1999 edition, Hot Docs moved to May, when it's possible to stand in a long line outside a theatre in Little Italy and not regret your life choices. (The opening night gala was held at the Uptown Theatre, but the bulk of the festival's screenings were at The Royal, on College.) And for the second year straight, 69 films were screened over five days. Nice.

8. In 2000, the festival expanded its influence with the Toronto Documentary Forum, which puts together filmmakers and funders for pitch sessions. Now known as the Hot Docs Forum, it launches dozens of projects every year. (Number of films screened at 2000 festival: 84.)

9. The 2001 edition screened 70 films, including Shelley Saywell's *Out Of The Fire*, and expanded its industry side with new programs of development meetings and master classes. The second-annual Toronto Documentary Forum sees the pitch for *The Five Obstructions*, the movie where Lars Von Trier tortures director Jørgen Leth just because he can.

10. In 2002, Hot Docs expanded to the 10-day screening schedule we know and love – screening a record 98 films – and made the Bloor Cinema a regular venue rather than a

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showcase spot. Nunavut filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk is the subject of the inaugural Focus On program.

11. Oh, so you thought 98 films was a lot? The 2003 festival screened 122 documentaries, and made daytime screenings free for students and seniors – a policy that remains in place today.

12. The 2004 festival dipped down a little with 106 films, including the Canadian premiere of Super Size Me, Morgan Spurlock's career-launching stunt documentary in which the filmmaker ate nothing but McDonald's menu items for 30 days straight. It was one of the most talked-about films of any Hot Docs festival, mostly because audiences couldn't stop asking Spurlock how he survived.

13. The 2005 edition screened 100 films, and one of the world premieres was of particular importance: Marshall Curry's Street Fight, about the 2002 Newark mayoral race, introduced us to an idealistic young city councilman named Cory Booker who went up against four-term

incumbent Sharpe James. Booker lost that election, but ran again in 2006 and won; now, he's a U.S. Senator and a possible Presidential contender in 2020.

14. In 2006, Hot Docs gave legendary filmmaker Werner Herzog its outstanding achievement award; the Bavarian legend came to Toronto for a delightful onstage conversation with then-director of programming Sean Farnel. (You can watch the whole thing [here](#).) Total films screened: 99.

15. The 2006 festival also marked the start of the Docs For Schools outreach program, screening documentaries to an estimated 7,000 students. Because knowledge is power!

16. The festival grew in leaps and bounds – 131 films in 2007 (among them Helvetica and In The Shadow Of The Moon), 170 in 2008 (Man On Wire, Anvil! The Story Of Anvil) and 171 in 2009 (Act Of God, The Cove and A Hard Name). The 2010 premiere of RUSH: Beyond The Lighted Stage brought Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee to a festival of 166 documentaries.

17. The 2011 festival screened 199 films, opening with Morgan Spurlock's "sell-out project" POM Wonderful Presents The Greatest Movie Ever Sold. (We talked about it [here](#).)

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18. After nearly a year of renovation – including a new screen, new sound system and new seating on the ground floor – the Bloor Cinema reopened in March 2012 as the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, with a new mandate of documentary programming and a renewed purpose as the flagship of the Hot Docs festival.

19. The 2012 festival launched Hot Docs Live!, simulcasting Indie Game: The Movie and China Heavyweight (and their filmmaker Q&As) to theatres across Canada.

20. For its 20th-anniversary edition in 2013, Hot Docs screened a record 204 documentaries and inaugurated the Scotiabank Big Ideas series, which brings in subjects and filmmakers for extended conversations after the first screening of their films. Guests for the first Big Ideas included Anita Hill, Romeo Dallaire and Richard Dawkins.

21. In 2014, the simulcast of Super Duper Alice Cooper reached 50 screens across Canada, with Mr. Cooper himself providing a very special post-screening Q&A... but it's arguable that Carroll Spinney, the Sesame Street puppeteer whose life is celebrated in I Am Big Bird, was the year's most moving guest. People really love Big Bird.

22. Hot Docs set a record for sprawl in 2015, occupying 13 venues in the physical world and multitudes more in the brand-new DocX virtual-reality program. Helmets for all!

23. Fresh from Sundance, Ezra Edelman's five-part, seven-and-a-half-hour ESPN documentary O.J.: Made In America became the hottest ticket of Hot Docs 2016 – though it only screened in its entirety just once, in one of the smallest auditoriums TIFF Bell Lightbox has to offer. It goes on to win an Oscar for best documentary feature, which is ridiculous.

24. The Bloor Hot Docs Cinema was rechristened the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in 2016, thanks to a \$5 million gift from Rogers that has no strings on it whatsoever. (The money also establishes the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund for Canadian Filmmakers. Rogers!)

25. The 2017 festival screened 228 films from a record 58 countries, and introduced the Rogers audience award for best Canadian documentary, with a cash prize of \$50,000. The first winner was Catherine Bainbridge's Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked The World, which also won the Hot Docs general audience award – and went on to win three Canadian Screen Awards including best feature documentary.

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/features/hot-docs-2018-25-facts-for-25-years/>

Tribeca and other film festivals aim for gender parity post-Weinstein 46% of films are by women at 2018 Tribeca Film Festival, while Hot Docs reaches gender parity this year

The Associated Press · Posted: Apr 17, 2018 4:34 PM ET | Last Updated: April 17

Asia Argento alleges he raped her during the Cannes Film Festival. Mira Sorvino said he chased her around a hotel room at the Toronto International Film Festival. Rose McGowan's alleged sex assault happened at the Sundance Film Festival.

Just as Harvey Weinstein did at the Oscars, the disgraced movie mogul lorded over the festival world, which provided the glitzy, champagne-flowing setting for many of his alleged crimes. And in the aftermath of Hollywood's sexual harassment scandals, film festivals have done some soul searching.

Codes of conduct have been rewritten, selection processes have been re-examined and, in many cases, gender equality efforts have been redoubled.

When the curtain goes up on the 17th annual Tribeca Film Festival on Wednesday, the festival will boast more female filmmakers than ever before. After last year accounting for a third of the slate, films directed by women make up 46 per cent at this year's festival.

Jane Rosenthal, co-founder of the festival and chief executive of Tribeca Enterprises, particularly wanted to launch this year's festival with the premiere of a film directed by a woman, about a woman. Lisa Dapolito's *Love Gilda*, about the comedienne Gilda Radner, will kick things off Wednesday at New York's Beacon Theatre. The first episode of Liz Garbus's Showtime documentary series *The Fourth Estate*, about the New York Times covering the first year of the Trump administration, will close the festival. On April 28, the festival will hold a day's worth of conversations with Time's Up, including Ashley Judd and Julianne Moore, to benefit the legal defence fund and gender equality initiative.

"For us it was, on one hand, business as usual," said Rosenthal, pointing to previous efforts Tribeca has made to promote female filmmakers, like its Nora Ephron Award. "But we tasked ourselves early on with: Can you get to 50-50? Can we have 50 per cent women filmmakers at the festival? We got to 46. I would say that it was fairly easy for us. Those pictures would probably have been in the festival without that kind of mandate."

Hot Docs reaches gender equality

Efforts to improve the movie business' record on gender equality have been ongoing at many, though not all, major film festivals in recent years. Pursuing parity has seemed at times like an arms race with various festivals touting their male-to-female ratios. The festival world is far

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ahead of the industry (only eight of last year's top 100 films at the box office were directed by women) and the Academy Awards (where Greta Gerwig became just the fifth woman ever nominated for best director this year).

Thirty-seven per cent of the 122 features at this year's Sundance were directed by women, including *Seeing Allred*, about women's rights attorney Gloria Allred. For the first time, all four of the festival's directing prizes went to female filmmakers. The festival's top prize, the Grand Jury Prize, went to Desiree Akhavan's *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*.

At SXSW in March, eight of the 10 films in the narrative competition were directed by women. At last fall's Toronto film festival, one third of entries were made by female filmmakers and a five-year, \$3 million campaign dubbed "Share Her Journey" was launched to support female filmmakers.

The Hot Docs Festival, a well-regarded documentary festival held annually in Toronto, reached gender parity for the first time this year. A year after a program featuring 48 per cent of female-directed projects, this year's 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects are 50/50 on gender. The festival on Tuesday also added the premiere of Barry Avrich's Weinstein documentary *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*.

'It was easy, actually'

Shane Smith, director of programming at Hot Docs, which begins April 26, said reflecting the diversity and the demands of the audience is imperative for "cultural gatekeepers" like film festivals.

"We were hoping we could get to gender parity," said Smith. "Once we started screening the work that was coming in, and the quality of the films and the stories that were being told by female filmmakers, we saw that it was a goal that was achievable this year," Smith said. "We weren't going to force this to happen if the work wasn't there. But given the strides that have happened in the last few years, it was easy, actually."

The Cannes Film Festival, which opens May 8, has applied a different strategy. Its artistic director, Thierry Fremaux, has regularly responded to complaints about the number of female filmmakers selected for its prestigious Palme d'Or competition by saying it's not a festival's place to consider anything but a submission's merit — that progress can only come further up the pipeline at studios and production companies.

Critics say Cannes's track record (only one female filmmaker, Jane Campion, has ever won the Palme) speaks for itself. Fremaux last week announced Cannes' main slate with three female filmmakers — Nadine Labaki, Alice Rohrwacher and Eva Husson — disappointing some who thought Cannes might adapt in the age of #MeToo.

"The question of a quota in no case concerns the artistic selection of a festival. Films are chosen for their quality," Fremaux said in a news conference last week. "There will never be a selection made by positive discrimination."

Change long overdue

Weinstein, who has denied allegations of sexual assault, was for years a dominant wheeler-and-dealer at Cannes. His fall was felt acutely there. "The Cannes Film Festival will never be the same again," said Fremaux, who vowed to re-examine the festival's own gender parity in salaries and jury selections.

Other festivals have had even tougher questions to answer. Last September's Fantastic Fest, the Austin-based genre film festival, caused a backlash after it was revealed that the festival's host, Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, had rehired blogger Devin Faraci a year after he stepped down following an accusation of sexual assault. Fox Searchlight pulled *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* from the festival.

Weinstein had less of a connection with the Tribeca festival, but the scandal still hit close to home. The Weinstein Co. is based in the same Tribeca building as the Tribeca Enterprises headquarters. "It was: 'Who's the stranger next door?'" said Rosenthal, Robert De Niro's longtime producing partner.

But as a Time's Up member herself, Rosenthal is hopeful that the industry is waking up to overdue change. Festivals don't have direct sway over what gets made and what sells, but they can play a vital role in showcasing filmmaking talent and sparking conversation.

"I've had a women's lunch for 15 years at the festival," said Rosenthal. "Now, it's going to be very crowded."

Post Weinstein, film festivals aim for gender parity

By Associated Press

Published: 13:51 EDT, 17 April 2018 | Updated: 15:11 EDT, 17 April 2018

NEW YORK (AP) - Asia Argento said he raped her during the Cannes Film Festival. Mira Sorvino said he chased her around a hotel room at the Toronto International Film Festival. Rose McGowan's encounter happened at the Sundance Film Festival.

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This image released by Showtime shows filmmaker Liz Garbus, left, talking with New York Times White House correspondent Julie Hirschfeld Davis in Washington, during the filming of the original documentary series "The Fourth Estate." The first episode of the series will close the 17th annual Tribeca Film Festival. (T.J. Kirkpatrick/Showtime via AP)

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Daily Mail.com – April 17, 2018 (2 of 3)

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Netflix and Amazon Aren't Buying Documentaries, But the Non-Fiction Market Is Booming Anyway

The digital disruptors aren't buying documentaries the way they were a year ago, but that doesn't mean the marketplace has gone stagnant.

Anthony Kaufman

Apr 17, 2018 10:00 am

Documentaries are hotter than ever, but their production and distribution is in constant flux. In 2017, major companies were shelling out huge dollars to acquire documentaries, dramatically shifting the scales for the budgets and value of nonfiction. Then everything changed at Sundance 2018, when contrary to expectations, Netflix and Amazon deescalated the marketplace they had super-sized a year before.

At the Park City festival, Netflix acquired a single doc, “Shirkers”; Amazon hasn’t acquired a completed documentary since Matthew Heineman’s “City of Ghosts” from 2017. “It’s like night and day,” said one documentary producer. While Amazon’s strategy remains unclear, Netflix has refocused its resources on producing documentaries in-house.

Both companies declined to comment for this article. But it’s clear that their recent absence from the market has had impact — deals have taken longer to close and the price-tags have been reduced.

“We’re having to educate producers and financiers not to expect the bigger deals of two years ago,” said Josh Braun of Submarine Entertainment, who is entering the Tribeca Film Festival this week with seven documentaries up for sale. “There are still seven-figure deals,” he said, “but with the SVOD platforms buying less, it’s not always as competitive.”

But that’s not to say that documentaries are losing their heat. On the contrary, the appetite for documentaries is growing, with major players turning to the nonfiction space in larger numbers.

“The documentary film and series market is experiencing a revival,” said Blumhouse Television co-president Marci Wiseman. “It’s becoming general, not specialty entertainment.”

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Blumhouse's Tribeca premiere "Bathtubs Over Broadway," an amusing look at the secret history of corporate "industrial musicals," is one of many new documentaries trying to capitalize on what Wiseman called "exciting opportunities in the TV space."

"We are having conversations with buyers who were never interested in docs before," she said.

What's Hot in Docs?

Such excitement around nonfiction, however, is putting increased pressure on documentary filmmakers to make their projects commercial "character-driven narratives or very high concept," according to Endeavor Content agent Kevin Iwashina, who is also representing several new documentaries at the Tribeca Film Festival, including ones about professional surfers and Air Jordan sneakers. "One can no longer focus on just an 'issue,'" he said.

Many of the buzzed-about new films, arriving at festivals like Tribeca and Hot Docs, appear to offer some combination of the two. For example, Iwashina is also representing "United Skates," Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown's equally kinetic and stirring look at roller-skating culture in the African American community—and their fight to retain it, despite economic and racist policies working against them.

Veteran sales agent John Sloss' Cinetic Media has eight new documentaries up for acquisition at Tribeca, including "American Meme," an easily-pitchable profile of online influencers, which, according to Sloss, is "very commercial," as well as potential breakout "Roll Red Roll," a compelling true-crime story of rape and social media in a small football town, which eventually spirals into a major international event and iconic story for the #MeToo movement.

"Roll Red Roll" producer Jessica Devaney, who is also a producer on two other documentaries premiering at Tribeca and Hot Docs that combine the personal and the political ("The Feeling of Being Watched" and "Call Her Ganda"), agrees there's "a tremendous amount of pressure" and "negotiating expectations" right now. But Devaney is confident that her doc slate taps into the current cultural moment—where audiences are responding to stories made by and about under-represented groups (like "Black Panther" or "Strong Island").

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According to Iwashina, “premium documentaries” have the unique ability to satisfy the public’s need right now for both entertainment and knowledge: to “allow us to escape as well as to make us think,” he said.

This rise in the social currency of documentaries is also what’s driving Netflix and other streamers and broadcasters to ramp up their own funding and production of nonfiction content.

“The marketplace is growing which is increasing demand,” said Iwashina. “Distributors understand they have to participate in the process as early as possible.”

“The Rachel Divide”

At Tribeca, for instance, Netflix will unveil its own documentary slate, Laura Brownson’s “The Rachel Divide,” Kirby Dick’s “The Bleeding Edge,” and Dawn Porter’s docu-series “Bobby Kennedy for President,” while other major small-screen companies are also following suit: CNN Films has this year’s opening night film, “Love, Gilda,” a poignant chronicle of comedienne Gilda Radner’s career, while Showtime has Liz Garbus’ closing night docu-series, “The Fourth Estate.” Other familiar players include A&E Indie (“No Greater Law,” about a Christian sect) and HBO (“Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland”), as well as newcomer Hulu (“Tiny Shoulders: Rethinking Barbie”).

Hulu is also frequently mentioned as a viable new distribution outlet. The company’s presence also helps drive distribution sales due to its output deals with such theatrical distributors as Magnolia Pictures and Neon, who’ve remained committed to docs.

No Longer a Skewed Market

Indeed, with more small-screen companies going into production, a range of theatrical distributors have continued to stake a claim on completed documentaries for sale. “In terms of acquisitions, the current situation may give the traditional distributors an advantage, at least in the short term,” said Braun.

According to Oscilloscope Laboratories president Dan Berger, “because of players like Amazon and Netflix stepping back, it skews the whole market. But I think it’s in a good way, because the

Indie Wire – April 17, 2018 (4 of 4)

pool of films is a little more open. At Sundance this year, it enabled us to get films [documentaries ‘On Her Shoulders’ and ‘The King’] that we may not have otherwise had access to.”

However, theatrical distributors are in a tricky situation, because the theatrical market for documentaries hasn’t been as robust as in the past. “For some reason, there’s a hesitancy in the moviegoing marketplace to see docs in movie theaters,” said Sloss, “but there doesn’t seem to be hesitancy in watching them at home.”

In fact, this time next year, the overall documentary marketplace could shift back to streamers in a big way. Nascent digital platforms such as Apple, Facebook, and YouTube Red are all currently in the mix, say sales agents, and are likely to emerge in a larger way in the coming months.

And, as Sloss noted, “Netflix is still very much in the doc business.”

Nueve películas hispanas que podrás ver en el Hot Docs Festival 2018

Los mejores documentales del mundo desde el 26 de abril. ¿Quieres ganar tickets?



Por nuestra redacción

Toronto · Publicado el: 17 abril, 2018

El **Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival** iniciará este 26 de abril con los mejores documentales de distintas ciudades alrededor del mundo. Este es el festival fílmico más grande de todo Norte América, por lo que los ojos del mundo estarán en las películas que seguramente recibirán nominaciones en los Golden Globes y los Oscar.

México es sin duda el país que más documentales está presentando este año, pero Ecuador, Chile y Argentina no se quedaron atrás. En total son nueve las películas que nos representarán en este festival:

- 52 segundos (Ecuador)
- Cielo (Chile)
- Primas (Argentina)
- Artemio (México)
- No sucumbió la eternidad (México)
- Ya me voy (México)
- Mamacita (México)
- Rush hour (México)
- Witkin & Witkin (México)

Toronto Hispano – April 17, 2018 (2 of 3)

Gana entradas

Como todos los años el evento se realizará en **Toronto** y esta vez tu tienes la oportunidad de ir. Nosotros te regalamos entradas para asistir a dos de las películas latinoamericanas que se presentarán este año. Se trata de *52 segundos* (Ecuador) y *No sucumbió la eternidad* (México), ambas con tramas que te atraparan desde el momento en el que sepas de qué tratan.

- *52 segundos*

El 16 de abril de 2016, un terremoto de magnitud 7.8 en la escala de Richter golpeó la costa ecuatoriana, y causó severos daños materiales. El sismo dejó 671 muertos y miles de personas heridas y sin hogar. Duró 52 segundos. Una de las ciudades más afectadas fue Portoviejo, la ciudad natal del cineasta Javier Andrade. Sin tener una idea clara de qué hacer después del shock que causó el terremoto, Javier fue a casa con una cámara y regresó con una película.

Participa en el sorteo para ver esta película [**AQUÍ.**](#)

- *No sucumbió a la eternidad*

Retrato de las batallas íntimas de dos mujeres que aguardan a sus desaparecidos. Dos historias distantes por décadas: la de Liliana, a quien en 2010 el crimen organizado le arrebató a su esposo, y la de Alicia, cuya madre fue desaparecida por el Estado en 1978, durante la Guerra Sucia. Ambas se encuentran en este documental para mostrar los conflictos de la memoria y su lucha cotidiana por no desaparecer de la vida.

Participa en el sorteo para ver esta película [**AQUÍ.**](#)

25 años de cine

Este 2018 el festival Hot Docs celebra 25 años desde que iniciaron en 1993 esta aventura de presentar películas independientes, las cuales hoy son iconos en diversos países. Hot Docs

Toronto Hispano – April 17, 2018 (3 of 3)

fue fundada en 1993 por la **Organización de Documentales de Canadá**, anteriormente conocida como **Canadian Canadian Film Caucus**.

El DOC es una asociación nacional de cineastas independientes. Paul Jay, entonces presidente del CIFC, fue el presidente de la junta fundadora y Debbie Nightingale fue la productora del evento. El primer evento se llevó a cabo del 24 al 27 de febrero de 1994, incluida la primera conferencia de la industria y los **Premios del Cine Documental Nacional**.

<http://toronto.hispanocity.com/publicacion/nueve-peliculas-hispanas-que-podras-ver-en-el-hot-docs-festival-2018/>

Hot Docs adds 'The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret'

CANADIAN PRESS

Updated: April 17, 2018

TORONTO — Just six months after the Harvey Weinstein scandal broke and triggered a flood of sexual misconduct allegations as well as the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, a Canadian documentary examining the saga is set to make its debut.

"The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret," directed by Montreal-born doc maker Barry Avrich and produced by Melissa Hood of Toronto, will screen April 28 and May 5 as part of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

"The purpose of the film was to immortalize a debate and a time in history, an era, in the face of social media that is, I think in a lot of ways, undermining a lot of the accusations," said Avrich, whose other projects include the 2011 documentary "Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project."

"Because the cycle happens so quickly that you don't have enough time to debate, the public is getting bored, so how do you keep the debate going? That was the purpose for the film: to immortalize this debate and the conversation, affect change."

Billed as "a definitive film about the abuse of power in a complicit culture," the doc has interviews with several actresses who've come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Weinstein, filmmaker James Toback and others. Those actresses include Katherine Kendall and Melissa Sagemiller.

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Also among the interviewees is Dylan Farrow, filmmaker Woody Allen's adopted daughter who alleges he molested her in an attic in 1992 when she was 7. Allen has long denied the allegations and was investigated but not charged.

Montreal Gazette – April 17, 2018 (2 of 3)

Hood said Farrow's story "highlights some of the contradictions and the complexities" of the Time's Up movement when it comes to supporting certain alleged victims and not others, or separating the art from the artist.

Also featured in the doc is Toronto lawyer Marie Henein, who represented former CBC radio star Jian Ghomeshi in a high-profile sexual assault case. Ghomeshi was found not guilty.

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Weinstein has previously denied through a spokeswoman any allegations of non-consensual contact.

Toback has vehemently denied the allegations.

Avrich said he began working on the film the day the Weinstein scandal broke in October and "went into high gear" when the movie mogul was fired by the company he co-founded.

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Montreal Gazette – April 17, 2018 (3 of 3)

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Asked if he thinks Weinstein might try to put an end to this film like he tried to do with his 2011 doc, Avrich said: “Probably, I’m sure. But bring it on, so be it.

“Glass will be broken and I’m ready for that.”

Deadline – April 17, 2018

Harvey Weinstein Doc 'The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret' To Premiere At Hot Docs

by Anita Busch
April 17, 2018 8:30am

In 2010, filmmaker Barry Avrich wrote, directed and produced *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project*, a documentary about the micro-managing, hair-trigger tempered but ultimately genius Hollywood producer. Now Avrich and producer Melissa Hood's new documentary *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* will have its world premiere at the 25th Hot Docs Film Festival. It will bow as part of the festival's Special Presentations program

Avrich's new feature length documentary returns to detail what he didn't know then about the far darker side of the now-disgraced sexual predator. Which begs the question, if it was Hollywood's worst kept secret, how come the subject didn't come up eight years ago in his first doc.

The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret is executive produced by Hood, Patrice Theroux and Avrich.

The Reckoning opens with a contrite Weinstein packing off to a rehab centre, right before the #MeToo movement exploded.

But the film doesn't only talk about Weinstein, it looks at other scandals involving James Toback, Woody Allen and Louis C.K. It features interviews with insiders, those who came forth as victims and whistleblowers.

The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret will screen on Saturday, April 28, at 1:00 p.m. at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. Afterwards, there will be an extended post-screening Q&A with special guest subjects, and on Saturday, May 5, at 6:00 p.m. at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.

Paradigm is handling the worldwide sales.

<https://deadline.com/2018/04/harvey-weinstein-documentary-the-reckoning-hollywoods-worst-kept-secret-hot-docs-premiere-1202366136/>

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CANADIAN PRESS

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"Because the cycle happens so quickly that you don't have enough time to debate, the public is getting bored, so how do you keep the debate going? That was the purpose for the film: to immortalize this debate and the conversation, affect change."

Billed as "a definitive film about the abuse of power in a complicit culture," the doc has interviews with several actresses who've come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Weinstein, filmmaker James Toback and others. Those actresses include Katherine Kendall and Melissa Sagemiller.

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Edmonton Journal – April 17, 2018 (2 of 3)

Hood said Farrow's story "highlights some of the contradictions and the complexities" of the Time's Up movement when it comes to supporting certain alleged victims and not others, or separating the art from the artist.

Also featured in the doc is Toronto lawyer Marie Henein, who represented former CBC radio star Jian Ghomeshi in a high-profile sexual assault case. Ghomeshi was found not guilty.

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Weinstein has previously denied through a spokeswoman any allegations of non-consensual contact.

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Avrich said he began working on the film the day the Weinstein scandal broke in October and "went into high gear" when the movie mogul was fired by the company he co-founded.

Initially Avrich thought he would update his 2011 doc on Weinstein, which doesn't mention any sexual misconduct allegations (Avrich said he was unaware of them when he made the film).

But Avrich and Hood eventually realized "this needed to be a wider scope of discussion and debate."

"Once we realized how big this story was becoming and how many people were affected and how many industries were affected, we knew there was no endpoint to this filmmaking," said Hood, who is also an actress.

“You could make this film forever, but we wanted to jump in early and get on top of these questions.”

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Canadian Press

Published: April 17, 2018

Updated: April 17, 2018 10:52 AM EDT

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Canoe.com – April 17, 2018 (2 of 3)

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Canoe.com – April 17, 2018 (3 of 3)

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Realscreen – April 17, 2018

Hot Docs '18: Barry Avrich's Weinstein doc added to lineup

By Playback Daily

April 17, 2018



Barry Avrich's documentary *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* will make its world premiere in the Special Presentations program at this year's Hot Docs.

Produced by Melissa Hood, Avrich's film is a follow-up of sorts to his 2010 doc *Unauthorised: The Harvey Weinstein Project*, which examined the career and notorious temperament of the beleaguered Hollywood producer. After numerous allegations of sexual assault and harassment against Weinstein came to light last year, it was widely reported that Avrich intended to make a new Weinstein doc.

Featuring interviews from alleged victims and whistleblowers, *The Reckoning* begins as Weinstein heads to rehab and details the aftermath of the allegations that rocked the film and TV industry last October. According to a press release, the film explores systemic abuse in the film industry, and tackles scandals involving Woody Allen, Louis C.K. and James Toback, in addition to featuring interviews with Canadian figures like Marie Henein and Margaret Wente.

Hood, Avrich (pictured) and **Patrice Theroux** are all exec producers on the project.

The doc will premiere at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on April 28 at 1 p.m. ET with a Q&A post-screening.

Other docs selected to screen in the festival's **Special Presentations category** include **Louie Psihoyos**' *The Game Changers* (produced by Joseph Pace and James Wilks), Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettehadgui's *McQueen* and Steve Loveridge's doc on the evolution of rapper/singer-songwriter M.I.A in *Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.*

<http://realscreen.com/2018/04/17/barry-avrichs-weinstein-doc-to-bow-at-hot-docs/>

Canadian doc *The Reckoning*, about Harvey Weinstein and other cases, set for Hot Docs

By VICTORIA AHEARN

The Canadian Press

Tues., April 17, 2018

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Film producer-director Barry Avrich is shown in the projection booth at a Toronto screening room on Tuesday May 3, 2016. *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*, directed by Montreal-born Avrich and produced by Melissa Hood of Toronto, will screen April 28 and May 5 as part of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival. (CHRIS YOUNG / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Film producer-director Barry Avrich is shown in the projection booth at a Toronto screening room on Tuesday May 3, 2016. *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*, directed by Montreal-born Avrich and produced by Melissa Hood of Toronto, will screen April 28 and May 5 as part of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival. (CHRIS YOUNG / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

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Toronto Star – April 17, 2018 (2 of 3)

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Toronto Star – April 17, 2018 (3 of 3)

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“Glass will be broken and I’m ready for that.”

—With files from The Associated Press

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Hot Docs adds 'The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret'

Canadian Press

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Film producer-director Barry Avrich is shown in the projection booth at a Toronto screening room on Tuesday May 3 , 2016. "The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret," directed by Montreal-born Avrich and produced by Melissa Hood of Toronto, will screen April 28 and May 5 as part of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival. Chris Young / THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — Just six months after the Harvey Weinstein scandal broke and triggered a flood of sexual misconduct allegations as well as the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, a Canadian documentary examining the saga is set to make its debut.

"The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret," directed by Montreal-born doc maker Barry Avrich and produced by Melissa Hood of Toronto, will screen April 28 and May 5 as part of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

"The purpose of the film was to immortalize a debate and a time in history, an era, in the face of social media that is, I think in a lot of ways, undermining a lot of the accusations," said Avrich, whose other projects include the 2011 documentary "Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project."

"Because the cycle happens so quickly that you don't have enough time to debate, the public is getting bored, so how do you keep the debate going? That was the purpose for the film: to immortalize this debate and the conversation, affect change."

Billed as "a definitive film about the abuse of power in a complicit culture," the doc has interviews with several actresses who've come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Weinstein, filmmaker James Toback and others. Those actresses include Katherine Kendall and Melissa Sagemiller.

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It also has interviews with journalists, agents, psychologists, former Miramax employees and lawyers as it looks at the debates surrounding such allegations, the impact of these cases, and the systemic and cultural issues leading to harassment.

Also among the interviewees is Dylan Farrow, filmmaker Woody Allen's adopted daughter who alleges he molested her in an attic in 1992 when she was 7. Allen has long denied the allegations and was investigated but not charged.

Hood said Farrow's story "highlights some of the contradictions and the complexities" of the Time's Up movement when it comes to supporting certain alleged victims and not others, or separating the art from the artist.

Also featured in the doc is Toronto lawyer Marie Henein, who represented former CBC radio star Jian Ghomeshi in a high-profile sexual assault case. Ghomeshi was found not guilty.

Henein is now representing a Toronto actress suing Weinstein for sexual assault. The allegations have not been tested in court.

"Certainly Marie Henein, coming off the Ghomeshi case, is a complex person and a complex voice in this film, but we wanted it because she's seen both sides of it," said Avrigh.

The filmmakers said they wanted to feature a wide range of voices to reflect the generational divide over the issues explored.

They did not ask Weinstein or Toback for interviews. Avrigh said he figured Weinstein wouldn't agree to it and Toback has "said it all in how he's responded and reacted to all of this. I really didn't want to hear any more from him."

Weinstein has previously denied through a spokeswoman any allegations of non-consensual contact.

Toback has vehemently denied the allegations.

Avrigh said he began working on the film the day the Weinstein scandal broke in October and "went into high gear" when the movie mogul was fired by the company he co-founded.

Initially Avrigh thought he would update his 2011 doc on Weinstein, which doesn't mention any sexual misconduct allegations (Avrigh said he was unaware of them when he made the film).

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But Avrigh and Hood eventually realized “this needed to be a wider scope of discussion and debate.”

“Once we realized how big this story was becoming and how many people were affected and how many industries were affected, we knew there was no endpoint to this filmmaking,” said Hood, who is also an actress.

“You could make this film forever, but we wanted to jump in early and get on top of these questions.”

Avrigh said the doc will either have a theatrical release or a broadcast date in the fall, and they’re open to changing the ending if a major development happens.

Hood said she wanted to make the doc now to help affect change during what she feels is a watershed moment.

“I’ve always been really struck by how many women it takes before people will listen and believe a woman,” said Hood.

“Ever since the Jian Ghomeshi thing, I’ve really wanted to look at the question of why women are not being believed and why women are being discredited and dismissed. So I felt that this film really gave us an opportunity to look at that.”

Asked if he thinks Weinstein might try to put an end to this film like he tried to do with his 2011 doc, Avrigh said: “Probably, I’m sure. But bring it on, so be it.

“Glass will be broken and I’m ready for that.”

Hot Docs Fest Adds Harvey Weinstein Doc 'The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret'

7:14 AM PDT 4/17/2018 by Etan Vlessing

Director Barry Avrich gets a second crack at his 2010 doc 'Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project' amid the #Metoo era.

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival on Tuesday announced a world premiere for *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*, an update of a 2010 documentary on disgraced indie film producer Harvey Weinstein for Hollywood's Time's Up era.

Director Barry Avrich has re-edited and will rerelease his earlier doc *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project* in the wake of sexual misconduct allegations and an unfolding scandal against the Hollywood producer.

The original Weinstein doc, while portraying the indie film mogul as infamously aggressive, did not reference the recent allegations of abuse and harassment brought against Weinstein and his former company during a series of explosive media reports last fall.

The doc also will investigate allegations against James Toback, Woody Allen and Louis C.K., and has new interviews with insiders, alleged victims and whistle-blowers.

Hot Docs plans festival screenings for *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* on April 28 and May 5 in Toronto. Paradigm Talent Agency is handling international sales on the film.

Weinstein has had police reports filed against him in New York, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills and London. Through his reps, he has vehemently denied any allegations of nonconsensual sex. Weinstein has yet to be criminally charged.

Hot Docs Adds Barry Avrich Doc ‘The Reckoning’

Posted on April 17th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



The Reckoning
Courtesy Hot Docs

By Pat Mullen

Hollywood’s biggest headline gets the documentary treatment in the latest addition to the Hot Docs line-up. The festival announced today that Barry Avrich’s *The Reckoning: Hollywood’s Worst Kept Secret* would join the list of Special Presentations selections at this year’s festival. The doc chronicles the downfall of Hollywood mogul/sexual predator Harvey Weinstein following the Pulitzer prize winning reports by *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* about his history of sexual assault and harassment that directly sandbagged the careers of numerous actresses. Weinstein’s fall precipitated a watershed discussion on systemic misogyny and harassment in the workplace.

Avrich’s film marks a return to the mogul following the 2010 doc *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project* about Weinstein’s toxic business practices. *The Reckoning* follows up by laying out the information Avrich—and many who did business with Weinstein—didn’t know was going on behind the scenes. The film extends its look at Weinstein’s crimes to the actions by other Hollywood figures swept up in “The Reckoning” and gives voice to many women as the industry makes sense of this time of change.

The Reckoning will screen on at Hot Docs on Saturday, April 28, at 1:00 p.m. at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, featuring an extended post-screening Q&A with special guest subjects, and on Saturday, May 5, at 6:00 p.m. at the TIFF Lightbox. Avrich previously appeared at Hot Docs with *Blurred Lines: Inside the Art World* and *Quality Balls*, among others. This year’s festival shows the impact of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements inspired by the response to women

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speaking up to systemic abuse with the inclusion of the all-female programme The Silence Breakers.

Hot Docs also announced today a title change for the previously announced selection *How Do You Feel About Dying*. The doc by Cameron Mullenneaux will now play as *Exit Music*. Its showtimes on April 27 and 29 and May 5 remain unchanged.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6.

Barry Avrich's new Weinstein doc to bow at Hot Docs

The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret is the Canadian filmmaker's follow-up to his 2010 doc about the now-disgraced Hollywood producer.

By Lauren Malyk

Barry Avrich's documentary *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* will make its world premiere in the Special Presentations program at this year's Hot Docs.

Produced by Melissa Hood, Avrich's film is a follow-up of sorts to his 2010 doc *Unauthorised: The Harvey Weinstein Project*, which examined the career and notorious temperament of the Hollywood producer. After numerous allegations of sexual assault and harassment against Weinstein came to light last year, it was widely reported that Avrich intended to make a new Weinstein doc.

Featuring interviews from alleged victims and whistleblowers, *The Reckoning* begins as Weinstein heads to rehab and details the aftermath of the allegations that rocked the film and TV industry last October. According to a press release, the film explores systemic abuse in the film industry, and tackles scandals involving Woody Allen, Louis C.K. and James Toback, in addition to featuring interviews with alleged victims and whistleblowers.

Hood, Avrich and Patrice Theroux are all exec producers on the project.

The doc will premiere at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on April 28 at 1 p.m. with a Q&A post-screening.

Other docs selected to screen in the festival's **Special Presentations category** include *The Game Changers* (produced by Joseph Pace and James Wilks and directed by Louie Psihoyos), Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui's *McQueen* and Steve Loveridge's doc on the evolution of rapper/singer-songwriter M.I.A in *Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.*

Film Review: 'Pick of the Litter'

Five Labrador puppies undergo training as guide dogs for the blind in this documentary guaranteed to have inbred appeal to dog-lovers.

By **DENNIS HARVEY**



CREDIT: IMDB

Director:

Dana Nachman, Don Hardy

With:

Janet Gearheart, Ronald Strother, Christine Benninger, Linda Owen, Rebecca Minelga, Eric Minelga, Nick Ursano, Alice Ursano, Cathy Wassenberg, Bill Wassenberg, Lisa King, Chris King, Patti White, Al White.

Release Date:

Aug 31, 2018

One hour 20 minutes

Official Site: <http://www.pickofthelitter.com>

Short of "Toddlers in Bunny Onesies: The Movie," it's hard to think of a film concept more guaranteed to elicit the "Awwwww..." factor than that demonstrated by "Pick of the Litter." Dana Nachman and Don Hardy's fourth documentary feature as co-directors follows five Labrador puppies as they undergo the lengthy training process to become guide dogs for the blind — a challenge that most four-legged aspirants will ultimately fail. Though not particularly inspired in packaging or storytelling, this solidly crafted item is guaranteed to appeal to mutt-lovers, as attested to by the several festival audience awards it's already accumulated since its Slamdance premiere in January. Sundance Selects plans an Aug. 31 release.

After a short prologue in which visually impaired persons recall how guide dogs saved their lives — from speeding cars, falling down staircases, even the 78th floor of a World Trade Center tower on 9/11 — we're introduced to our protagonists. The five black-and-tan Labs dubbed Patriot, Potomac, Primrose, Poppet and Phil are born on the campus of Guide Dogs for the Blind's San Rafael, Calif., campus, and they've scarcely a day old before their training begins.

Eight weeks later, each are farmed out to "puppy raiser" families and individuals who'll foster them through up to 16 months of socialization and other preliminary prep for the job at hand.

Only a few such dogs end up assigned to the blind; there are a lot of challenging hoops to jump through en route. Patriot proves mouthy and unruly with his teenage foster owner from the get-go. Turned over to an Iraq vet with more experience — and for whom these canine caretaking gigs are a helpful distraction from his PTSD — the dog performs better. Likewise, Phil is transferred from one couple to another, the latter practiced "fixers" for problem dogs. Some

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volunteers complain that such administrative transfers are too abrupt and impersonal, heightening the painful emotions of parting with an animal.

But GDB is rigorous about pursuing whatever might maximize a pup's chances, even if the majority of canines nonetheless end up as HQ-dwelling "breeders" (like the Labs' mom) or otherwise "career changed" — whether handed over to different nonprofits or adopted as plain old domestic pets. After they're done being fostered, the dogs head back to the campus for 10 weeks' "formal guide work" with an assigned staffer who often wears a blindfold to test the dogs' reactions to obstacles, traffic peril and verbal commands. Even at this late stage, they can still flunk out.

The successful graduates are matched with the lucky few among some 1,100 applicants per year, in this case including a partially sighted career woman now on her fourth such dog, and a Oregon man who's gotten by without one so far. He's thrilled by the major life changes a guide dog will bring; it's generally agreed that using a cane is far more limiting.

"Pick" is brisk and pleasant, but not terribly involving or memorable. Human interest is limited by the number of hands most of these hounds pass through, and perhaps due to the rather strict demands of their training, the dogs themselves don't get to express a lot of personality. Some insight into GDB's history (it was founded in 1942 to aid blinded soldiers back from WWII) would have been interesting while also broadening a narrow focus that's inevitably appealing but provides few insights or surprises. Do problems ever arise after a blind person gets their dog? Such knottier questions go unaddressed here.

The packaging is bright, straightforward and a little pedestrian, including the slightly cutesy tenor struck by Helen Jane Long's original score.

Film Review: 'Pick of the Litter'

Reviewed online, San Francisco, April 15, 2018. (In SFFilm, Slamdance, Cinequest, Hot Docs.) Running time: 80 MIN.

PRODUCTION: (Documentary) A Sundance Selects release of a KTF Films production. (International sales: Submarine, New York.) Producers: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy. Executive producers: Ian Reinhard, Dan Braun, Josh Braun.

CREW: Directors: Dana Nachman, Don Hardy. Screenplay: Nachman. Camera (color, HD): Hardy. Editor: Hardy. Music: Helen Jane Long.

WITH: Janet Gearheart, Ronald Strother, Christine Benninger, Linda Owen, Rebecca Minelga, Eric Minelga, Nick Ursano, Alice Ursano, Cathy Wassenberg, Bill Wassenberg, Lisa King, Chris King, Patti White, Al White.

<https://variety.com/2018/film/reviews/pick-of-the-litter-review-1202754924/>

An oral history of Hot Docs: How the festival went from humble beginnings to industry dominance

BARRY HERTZ

PUBLISHED 6 HOURS AGOUPDATED APRIL 18, 2018



The modern Hot Docs Cinema marquee on Bloor Street West in Toronto.

JOSEPH MICHEAL PHOTOGRAPHY

On Feb. 25, 1994, a short item appears in *The Globe and Mail* announcing an event celebrating a tradition as Canadian as “hockey, maple syrup and clear-cut logging”: documentary filmmaking. Hot Docs: The National Documentary Film Awards kicks off as a four-day Toronto summit hosted by the Canadian Independent Film Caucus (now called the Documentary Organization of Canada).

Rudy Buttignol (former Hot Docs board director): A bunch of us doc filmmakers, we’d meet the first Tuesday of every month to gripe. Finally we came up with the name Canadian Independent Film Caucus. I pulled out a three-ring sheet of paper, wrote the name down, the date, and told everyone to sign it and give me \$10. We had \$90 and were on our way. That’s the root of everything.

John Walker (filmmaker, former board director): The concept evolved out of trying to simply support each other’s work, to exhibit it to the public, to have an awards show. We worked on the premise that Canadian audiences in particular wanted documentaries, and that we were pretty good at making them.

Paul Jay (founding board chair): The CIFC had no revenue, so I said, “Why don’t we start a festival and use that to fund the CIFC?” Everyone said I was insane and knew nothing about festivals, which was true. There was a vote: 11-1 against the idea. Well nobody cares if I do this on my own time, right? I phoned Debbie Nightingale and asked for help.

Debbie Nightingale (founding executive director): It was scary, exciting, nerve-wracking. I’d been running the industry centre at TIFF and it seemed like there were festivals popping up

everywhere. The feeling was, “Oh, God, not another film festival.” But Paul made a compelling argument. The only thing, he told me, was that I had to raise the money. It took six months to get about \$100,000, which in 1993 was a hefty chunk of change.

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Jay: I got a meeting with Kodak Canada and asked for a grant to fund a feasibility study. They gave us \$10,000. I took \$2,000 to hire a guy to write the study, and used \$8,000 to start the festival. Debbie worked for free the first six months, and I was a volunteer. And it took off like wildfire. We got 100 entries, had screenings at the Bloor Cinema, others in hotel rooms. At the first gala dinner, I said, “Tonight, I’m going to reveal the results of the feasibility study.” I opened to the report’s last page, which said: “Not feasible.”

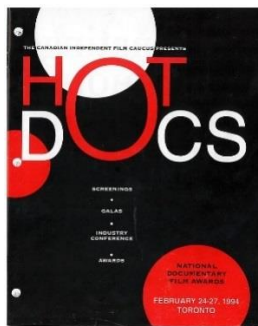


An archival photo of the early Bloor Cinema marquee.

KIANA HAYERI/COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

The inaugural fest opens with Canadian director Jean-Claude Labrecque’s film *André Mathieu, musicien*, and includes the Canadian premiere of *Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer* by future provocateur Nick Broomfield. The next few years remain largely industry focused, with programming selected by juries made up of other documentarians.

Barri Cohen (filmmaker, founding board member): Some of the chaos then was trying to recuse yourself from one thing or another because you knew the filmmaker who submitted. I also remember being furious that my first film, *Not Yet Diagnosed*, wasn’t at Hot Docs because that jury was just a bunch of white guys from out east saying, “Eh, we didn’t get it.” I was, like, what the hell?



Hot Docs festival poster, 1994.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

The timing of the festival also delivers a slight buzzkill.

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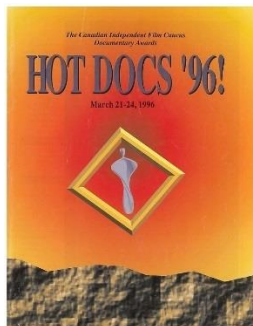
Buttingnol: I heard a lot of grumbling from international guests: “Why are you making me come to Toronto now, of all times?”

Louise Lore (filmmaker, former board chair): Those who came from Europe hated it. The commissioning documentary editor from the BBC, he’s got a choice to go to either L.A. or Toronto in the middle of winter – which is he going to choose? ... You have to remember, too, let’s face it, “documentary” is not sexy. It’s not like going to TIFF, where you might rub shoulders with a movie star.

In 1996, Hot Docs becomes a separately incorporated organization, and soon begins to focus on international cinema, public screenings and brand awareness. Notable late-nineties films include Peter Lynch’s *Project Grizzly* and Barbara Kopple’s *Wild Man Blues*.

Jay: At the same time, the CIBC was knocking on doors lobbying people for documentary filmmakers, we were asking the same guys for money for the film festival.

Walker: [The CIBC] realized it was time to get other people to run this thing so we could make the films we so desperately wanted to make. Hot Docs would continue on, and the board would be half filmmakers from members of what’s now called DOC.



Hot Docs festival poster, 1996.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Anne Pick (filmmaker, former board chair): We’d been doing everything from licking stamps to organizing screenings.

Lore: It began enthusiastically, but these people had their own films to make. And I think they were \$40,000 in debt. I hired Chris [McDonald] as the first actual employee, so he could start revamping it.

Buttingnol: That was our come-to-Jesus moment, when we knew that we had to start engaging with the broader public. Chris had the right personality, too, to deal with the eccentric characters who make up this industry – which is pretty much everybody.

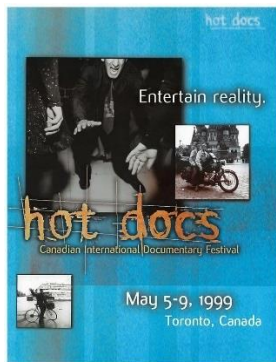
Chris McDonald (former executive director, current president): It was a roll of the dice. I had a great job at the Canadian Film Centre, but this was an opportunity to be the head of an organization. I literally walked into an empty office with no furniture. Maybe there was a chair. I

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went a couple months without cashing my paycheque because I knew it wouldn't clear. I was intimately aware of our bank balance.

Pick: Chris had to raise half of his own salary as part of his fundraising goals.

Karen Tisch (former managing director): If you said you worked for Hot Docs, people would say, "What? Hot Dogs?" Even establishing "doc" as a familiar term for the general public was an issue. But what was happening in the culture was fortuitous, as there was a surge of interest in non-fiction work. Suddenly, more docs were getting commercial releases, Michael Moore's stuff. We were able to ride that momentum.



Hot Docs festival poster, 1999.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

After his hire in 1998, McDonald and his team enact a series of game-changing moves, including shifting the festival to May and hiring programmers.

Lynne Fernie (filmmaker, Canadian programmer emeritus): It was all different then, screening VHS tapes. I'd go to the office and load up like a camel with 40 films at a time. It was a job about volume.

But in an an ill-fated bid to appeal to the public, Hot Docs in 1999 sets up shop in Little Italy.

McDonald: That was my dumb idea. I thought it'd be super charming to have screenings in cafés and bars during the day. The filmmakers were not so thrilled because there are espresso machines running, telephones ringing, streetcars rumbling by. It was just one year.

In 2000, the festival hits a turning point, nearly doubling its audience numbers to 16,700, welcoming living legends D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus, and launching what's now known as the Hot Docs Forum, an international co-financing pitch event.

Tisch: Part of developing the scope of the event was making it more of an international industry event, so we developed the Doc Forum, which had been done at IDFA [International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam].

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Jennifer Baichwal (filmmaker): I hate pitching, there's something demeaning about it. But we pitched our film *The True Meaning of Pictures* at a Hot Docs Forum and got financing to make it, got partners. As an arena of industry activity, it's pre-eminent in North America.

Norm Bolen (former board chair): When I joined around 2001, it was a little dysfunctional with a lot of rivalries. Some wanted it to be an industry-only event, some wanted it to be more public. There was confusion as to who was in charge. But these were swept away. Chris McDonald in particular, once he knew he had a board interested in resolving these issues, we could focus. There were reservations, but if you set ambitious stretch goals and commit to them, you can do more than you think.



The Royal Cinema during Hot Docs 1999.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

The festival grows by leaps and bounds in the early aughts (32,000 attendees in 2003; 51,500 in 2006), premieres films that would go on to Oscar fame (*War/Dance*, *Man on Wire*, *The Cove*), introduces education initiatives and free daytime screenings for seniors and youth, and cements its year-round presence with monthly Doc Soup screenings. At the same time, the industry landscape undergoes seismic shifts.

Robin Mirsky (current board co-chair): We went from multiple broadcasters licensing docs to a very small number willing to do so now, mainly the CBC and educational broadcasters. It's been getting more and more difficult for filmmakers to live and work.

Fernie: We were a bit worried after funding dried up for some filmmakers – we thought our submissions would go down. But technology also started making it possible to make films less expensively. It was a democratization, in a way.

Cohen: There were a number of changes in the funding ecology, and not to the benefit of filmmakers. It would hurt the pool of what one could curate. Around 2003, 2004, that period was pretty shallow.

Brett Hendrie (current executive director): There's only so much that we can control – we program the films, we don't make them. For the programming team, they're always looking for

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the best possible films, and we try to be careful to not overload the festival with something like [celebrity-focused films], because they can take the oxygen out of the room.

Buttignol: Documentaries about international rock stars get you lots of press, especially if Sting or U2 show up, but those aren't important. They're not the ones that are going to change the world. Look at what Blackfish did, or An Inconvenient Truth. That's the spirit of the festival.

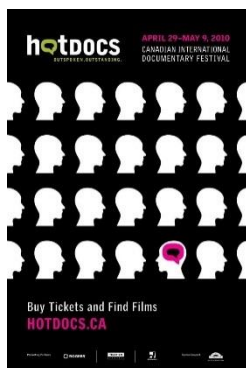
In 2005, Hot Docs rebrands, introducing the current slogan, "Outspoken. Outstanding." Yet as it grows, it faces tests as to balancing corporatization with its commitment to a medium ingrained with ideals of social justice.

Ezra Winton (visiting scholar, Lakehead University; director of programming, Cinema Politica Network): In 2006, Cadillac was a sponsor, and ran an ad before every screening. That same year, they showed An Unreasonable Man, a film about Ralph Nader. Word got out, and people started to bring in their bicycle bells to ring during the ad.

McDonald: I remember that film spending an awful lot of time on Nader's crusade against the auto industry. That was a bad one, but a lesson learned.

Jay: Commercialization, it's a hard thing to wrestle with. Even when we started it, we needed the grant from Kodak. On the other hand, we were more restrained about naming things after sponsors.

Winton: The question of values becomes central when talking about documentaries – there's a long-standing historical engagement with truth-telling. Hot Docs has, after 25 years, a chance now to be a leader in the festival world by publishing its best practices to actually articulate its values.



Hot Docs festival poster, 2010.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Festival attendance continues to grow – 122,000 in 2009; 150,000 in 2011 – and a few months before the 2012 edition, Hot Docs and Neil Tabatznik's Blue Ice Group open the newly renamed

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Bloor Hot Docs Cinema after a multimillion-dollar renovation. At the time, it is the world's only doc-focused cinema.

Neil Tabatznik (current board member): I'd been thinking of opening a documentary theatre for 15 years. I'd go to see docs at Hot Docs and Sundance but the audience beyond festivals – the potential to change people's worldview – was incredibly limited. Outside Michael Moore, who made it to theatres?

McDonald: Neil suggested looking at the two theatres on Mount Pleasant, and the one in Bloor West Village.

Tabatznik: We looked at the porn theatre in Koreatown for two seconds.

McDonald: But we said almost immediately: the Bloor. We knew the owners, knew they wanted to sell, and knew they didn't want it redeveloped. Neil stuck his neck out for us and provided a safety net, to underwrite any shortfall for the first go.



The Bloor Hot Docs Cinema in 2013.

JOHN R. BARDUHN

Tabatznik: Hot Docs were the best partners I could've invited to run the theatre. But no one was convinced it was going to be a success, or even able to wash its own face. I was giving my financial adviser a huge headache. Early on, we'd have docs with three to five people in the audience. But the uptick began almost immediately, and the fear of having to carry it disappeared.

McDonald: It took us a while to get the balance. I didn't appreciate that the cinema's year-round audiences are very different from the festival's. Festival-goers, some will see anything. So we created subscription series and mini-festivals where we controlled the content, not waiting for a blockbuster to be released.

In 2016, the festival screens a record 232 films, its audience numbers hit 211,000, and it finally becomes the master of its own domain. Thanks to a \$4-million donation from the Rogers Foundation, Hot Docs takes ownership of the Bloor, with the theatre renamed the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. Meanwhile, a \$1-million gift creates the Ted Rogers Fund for production development (complimenting the fest's other long-running doc production funds).

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Mirsky: That was spearheaded by Martha Rogers, who loves docs and wanted to honour [her late father] Ted. It allowed us to buy the building from Neil, so we run the business and the festival. Having a 365-day presence in a theatre that everybody in Toronto knows, that's a game-changer.

Tabatznik: Chris calls and says, "I have some good news for you!" And I said, "That was the worst news you could've given me." It was sad, but it's the right thing for Hot Docs.

McDonald: We have ambitious plans for the cinema, still. I wouldn't mind having a couple smaller screens. I think there are enough doc enthusiasts out there in Toronto.



The audience watches a screening of the film *Collective Invention* in 2015.

FRED LUM/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

In 2018, the festival's 25th edition arrives with its largest lineup yet (246 full-, medium-, and short-length films), and reaches gender parity in its programming. As streaming services such as Netflix increasingly look toward docs to build their catalogues, though, questions arise as to how large both the festival and its theatrical exhibition operation could, and should, grow.

McDonald: I worry about everything, but nothing has come along to replace that magical and collective experience of watching a film with hundreds of strangers. When that happens, I'll worry more.

Fernie: It's a political performance, to go to a theatre and watch a film together. There's always a desire to do something new and keep it fresh, sure, but the festival should take its cues from the films and filmmakers. Listen to them. They're the ones putting their lives and Visa cards on the line.

Walker: As a Canadian filmmaker, I want to make sure that our films are being highlighted. We could be showing more Canadian films, and there is a danger in getting too big. Too big, too fast, and you collapse.

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McDonald: We've learned by listening to our audience. We know that price is a factor, accessibility is a factor. You don't want to get too big, so a nice number is closer to 200 [films]. I trust Brett and [director of programming Shane Smith] explicitly. I don't imagine they want to go any bigger than they are now. You don't want to overwhelm.

Jay: The festival is in a place and time right now where we're facing existential issues as humans, from climate change to geopolitical rivalries. The festival needs to position itself in the context of the moment we're in. To just celebrate the documentary form, so what? These films are meant to have a social impact. They're made by people who want to change the world. Let's change the world.

The 2018 edition of Hot Docs runs April 26 through May 6 in Toronto (hotdocs.ca).

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<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-an-oral-history-of-hot-docs-how-the-festival-went-from-humble/>

Despite the odds, the Hot Docs Cinema has become a financial success story

SIMON HOUP MEDIA, ARTS

TORONTO

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It seems so unlikely as to be almost absurd.

In the spring of 2012, the Hot Docs film festival took a quixotic leap of faith when a board member purchased the bruised and battered Bloor Cinema in downtown Toronto, poured millions into a luxe renovation, and tapped the organization to run the place as a year-round shrine to documentaries. Never mind that single-screen cinemas were becoming as rare as northern white rhinos; or that money-spinning docs were rarer still; or that the streaming service Netflix was about to start hoovering up documentaries and keeping them out of cinemas.

Yet six years later, as Hot Docs prepares to kick off its annual 11-day documentary festival next week, its home on Bloor Street West – at 650 seats, the largest of its kind in the world – is now reliably profitable, according to financial statements the organization shared with The Globe and Mail.

The theatre survives through canny programming built upon data – albeit the anecdotal rather than the algorithmic kind – to find crowd-pleasers. And it has learned through relentless trial and error how to package earnest but hard-to-sell docs for finicky audiences.

Its success offers lessons for those foolhardy sorts who may want to give independent cinema operation a shot; for small businesses trying to refine their customer service; and for movie fans curious for a glimpse behind the curtain.

It might even make for a compelling documentary, because there have been some hard lessons along the way.

When the theatre first opened, “We just thought, we’ll do a retrospective on [the legendary documentary filmmaker] Albert Maysles, they’ll beat the doors down,” recalls Chris McDonald, the Hot Docs president who heads up the cinema operations. “Nope. We do screenings of [Maysles’s] Grey Gardens, and we don’t get a lot of people.”

It was confounding: The core Hot Docs audience, the ones who threw down \$350 for unlimited passes or snapped up books of tickets and then raced from one screening to the next during the festival, adored filmmakers such as Maysles. Programming a 364-day-a-year cinema demanded a different strategy.

To turn a profit, the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema (renamed from the Bloor in 2016 after a \$5-million donation from the Rogers family helped the organization buy the theatre from the board member, Neil Tabatznik) needs to pull in an average of 100 audience members per screening.

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“One of the things that was fascinating to us, which we learned by doing, was – this is a retail operation,” McDonald adds, sitting in the Hot Docs offices on Spadina Avenue just south of Bloor Street with Brett Hendrie, the festival’s executive director.

“It’s very different from the festival, very different in terms of the types of films we can play. Our [year-round] cinema audience gravitates more towards commercial fare. Lighter films about art, design, culture, music. Not Ukraine, not the Spanish Civil War – not any civil war. So, that was a bit of a light-bulb moment.”

Still, intelligence scraped from the festival does help inform programming for the cinema: Films that do well with single-ticket buyers, and audience-choice winners, are usually reliable hits.

McDonald jokes about wanting to develop an algorithm, like the ones Netflix uses to uncover and promote films within its catalogue that individual customers might like. “We have a database where we can search on subject matter that we’ve come up with ourselves. So when we have our program meetings, we can say: ‘Biographical films on antiheroes.’ Or ‘Evil dictators.’ Or whatever. We did the Nixon film – nobody came. So odds are, a film on Pinochet might not do well, do you know what I mean?”

“Jazz films do really well. Films about music do really well. Anything you can imagine in a really good New Yorker article, with that kind of a story, tends to do well. Broadly speaking: art, culture, design, travel – I’m giving away all our secrets. What we call ‘virtual tourism’: Really, really well.”

The cinema keeps 59 cents of every dollar it takes in at the box office, with 41 cents going to a film’s distributor.

Hot Docs shared its most recent annual income statement with The Globe, which indicated the cinema made a profit of approximately \$207,000 on revenue of \$2.1-million in 2017. Box office made up the largest share of its revenue (approximately \$709,000), representing about 34 per cent of total revenue. Other revenue came from special programming such as its podcast and Curious Minds festivals (\$318,000), both relatively new initiatives; concessions (\$366,000); and membership sales (\$232,000). It also earned about \$282,000 from rentals. (The festival pays to rent the cinema from itself.)

One key ingredient the income statement doesn’t show is the free labour donated by volunteers, who also power the festival: Ticket-takers typically get a complimentary popcorn and free admission to the film they’re working.

After a couple of big docs on Bob Marley and Amy Winehouse sent its box office soaring in the early years, McDonald said they were bewildered to see numbers plummet. That’s when they realized that, like the big theatre chains, they were at the mercy of the product pipeline. But, unlike the chains, they were able to respond by aggressively packaging and branding older films into a series of programs: mini-festivals, if you will – True Crime Tuesdays, Doc Soup Sundays, This Film Should Be Played Loud (music movies).

They even discovered a way to draw in audiences with civil-war docs, which form one part of their Films Changing the World program stream.

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Sometimes, they admit, it would be nice to be able to play first-run fiction films. “One Judi Dench film can make your year,” McDonald says .

But, Hendrie notes , the cinema’s singular focus helps brand them in an overcrowded marketplace. “When I go on social media, I see people say, ‘I went out to Hot Docs last night.’ They don’t say, I went out to this film last night.”

McDonald acknowledges that Netflix – which is a sponsor of the festival – has shifted the landscape.

“They tend to avoid traditional theatrical distribution. That makes it tougher for us,” he says. “At the same time, the counterargument would be they’re helping to create an appetite for documentaries, and a lot of people are watching docs and understanding their love of docs in a different way and maybe looking to our cinema and festival [to satisfy that].”

Still, “we’ve been nervous about technological changes and advances for 20 years,” he adds. “And nothing has – yet – come along to replace that magical feeling of being in a darkened cinema with hundreds of strangers.”

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-despite-the-odds-the-hot-docs-cinema-has-become-a-financial-success/>

From Won't You Be My Neighbor? to Love, Gilda, the top 10 to watch at this year's Hot Docs

The 25th anniversary of the Hot Docs Film Festival runs from April 26 to May 6 in Toronto

CHRIS KNIGHT

April 19, 2018
1:21 PM EDT



David Newell and Fred Rogers in *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* Focus Features

You could program an entire mini-festival out of the new documentaries of the #MeToo era. In fact, the 25th anniversary of the Hot Docs Film Festival, running April 26 to May 6 in Toronto, has done just that.

The section called “Silence Breakers” includes *Netizens*, about three women fighting back against anonymous online harassment; *Red Red Roll*, about a culture that allowed a rape in small-town Ohio to be covered up;

Yours in Sisterhood, in which people read and react to 40-year-old letters to the editors of *Ms. Magazine*; and *Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial*. Add to that the late addition to the lineup of *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*, Barry Avrich's explosive follow-up to his 2010 Harvey Weinstein documentary.

But even outside these important issues, Hot Docs has a multitude of stories to tell. Here are 10 more from the program that could be worth a look.

***Won't You Be My Neighbor?* (Morgan Neville)**

Fred McFeely Rogers – known to children and adults alike as TV's Mr. Rogers – died in 2003 less than a month before his 75th birthday. This doc looks back at more than 30 years of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, the man who made the show, and his simple, radical message of love.

***The Cleaners* (Hans Block, Moritz Riesewieck)**

Social media may seem like a free-for-all, especially if you've ever been in a Twitter war, but there are online content moderators for sites like Facebook, and this film introduces them and the perilous, difficult work of deciding what constitutes crossing the line.

***The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man* (Tommy Avallone)**

Like Sasquatch – except, you know, real – Bill Murray has appeared in grainy footage and handed-down stories the world over. He crashes parties, steals french fries, bartends, photo-bombs. This is Murray's Bigfoot movie.

***Love, Gilda* (Lisa D'Apolito)**

Murray's SNL colleague Gilda Radner died in 1989 of ovarian cancer. A treasure trove of audio recordings, home movies, interviews, clips and diary extracts read by the likes of Melissa McCarthy and Amy Poehler reminds us what a comic giant we lost.

***Mercury 13* (David Sington, Heather Walsh)**

Imagine if the first words from the moon had been spoken not by Neil Armstrong but by Myrtle Cagle. The 92-year-old is one of the surviving members of NASA's top-secret female astronaut training program, started in 1959. Surprised they weren't called astronautixes.

***More Human Than Human* (Tommy Pallotta, Femke Wolting)**

Borrowing the sci-fi motto of *Blade Runner's* Tyrell Corporation, this documentary looks at the limits of artificial intelligence, and asks whether a robot could ever take the place of a filmmaker.

***Our New President* (Maxim Pozdorovkin)**

You probably saw Donald Trump's election on CNN, CBC or online. But what did it look like from Russia? Here's the story of America's 45th president as told entirely through Russian news footage and social media clips.

***Tiny Shoulders: Rethinking Barbie* (Andrea Blaugrund Nevins)**

With her impossible measurements, dislike of math class and unusual resumé – she's been a flight attendant, a pilot and an astronaut, a secretary and a CEO, a nurse and an army medic – Barbie continues to annoy and confound. Here's what Mattel is working on next.

***Cielo* (Alison McAlpine)**

Spanish for sky (or heaven), *Cielo* sounds a lot like the 2010 doc *Nostalgia for the Light*, which looked at the heavens as seen from the dry, clear air of Chile's Atacama desert. But can you have too many movies about looking to the stars? We think not.

***Dreaming Murakami* (Nitesh Anjaan)**

A Danish translator becomes obsessed with creating the perfect translation of Japanese writer Haruki Murakami's prose. Described as a love letter to the art of translation, this doc is told with subtitles, of course.

The 25th Hot Docs Film Festival kicks off Apr. 26 with a screening of *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*. More information and tickets at hotdocs.ca.

<http://nationalpost.com/entertainment/movies/from-wont-you-be-my-neighbor-to-love-gilda-the-top-10-to-watch-at-this-years-hot-docs>

Ten must-see Hot Docs films focusing on women's stories

From the opening night film, *The Heat*, to features about activists Mandi Gray, Nadia Murad and Madonna Thunder Hawk, this year's slate is full of strong female portraits

BY SUSAN G. COLE

APRIL 19, 2018

7:00 AM



93Queen

No question that there's something going on out there, what with #MeToo, #TimesUp and other forms of activism transforming the political landscape. Hot Docs is right on top of it, emphasizing women's stories and directors at this year's fest. Here are some relevant pics to watch out for.

93QUEEN

There are many films at Hot Docs in which women step out of their usual roles, but this one is especially effective. When a group of women in a Hasidic community in Brooklyn decides to start an all-woman emergency unit, they encounter resistance from within and without. Sometimes problematic ringleader Rachel Freier is riveting and so is her cause.

Apr 29, 3 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 1, 8:45 pm TIFF 2; May 6, 8:45 pm, Hart House

AFGHAN CYCLES

The bicycle continues to play a revolutionary role in this study of a female cycling group in Bamiyan, where it's illegal for women to ride bikes. Defy the law and you can be imprisoned, even killed. That isn't stopping them from seeking their independence through cycling, even imagining that they will compete nationally. Sarah Menzies contrasts their painful daily existence with the exhilaration of independently pedalling through the hills.

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Apr 29, 8:15 pm, TIFF 2; May 1, 4 pm, TIFF 3; May 6, 3:30 pm Aga Khan Museum

BLOWIN' UP

Watch sex workers be treated with uncommon respect in a justice system initiative that allows them to avoid prosecution and criminal records by participating in a counselling program. Stephanie Wang-Breal follows the judge, social workers and clients interacting in unique relationships.

May 1, 6:45 pm, Hart House; May 3, 12:30 pm, TIFF 1; May 5, 9 pm, Revue

THE HEAT: A KITCHEN (R)EVOLUTION

Women chefs try to sustain their craft – and their authority – while changing the hierarchical culture in their kitchens. Maya Gallus tracks chefs with diverse interests and approaches, creating a fascinating journey through food land and revealing the joys and the challenges of their passionate pursuits.

Apr 26, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema (Big Ideas screening); Apr 28, 1:15 TIFF 1; May 6, 3:30 pm, Isabel Bader

MERCURY 13

U.S. astronauts are idolized like no other heroes. Many of those explorers could have been women long before Sally Ride soared into space in the 80s. Three decades earlier, scores of female pilots were tested and proved as able if not moreso than their male counterparts. Mercury 13 probes why these gifted aviators have been consigned to obscurity.

Apr 27 6:30 pm Hot Docs Cinema; Apr 28 10:45 am, TIFF 1; May 5 6:30 pm, Isabel Bader; May 6 5:45 pm, TIFF 1

ON HER SHOULDERS

This portrait of Nadia Murad probes her pursuit of justice for her Yazidi people, victims of genocide in Iraq. The outspoken advocate has to deal with her own trauma – including repeated sexual assaults – under the relentless scrutiny of the media and her enemies. Speaking out has never been so challenging

May 1, 6:15 pm, Isabel Bader; May 2, 10 am, TIFF 3; May 5, 4 pm, TIFF 2

SLUT OR NUT: DIARY OF A RAPE TRIAL

As #MeToo deniers grumble about all those abusers who never got a fair trial, here comes the perfect pic to illustrate how the system fails rape victims. After she was assaulted on the York U campus, Mandi Gray attempts to attain justice only to confront institutions determined to thwart her. Be prepared to be outraged by the power of rape culture and the system that supports it.

May 2, 9 pm, Isabel Bader; May 3, 8:45 pm, Socitabank 7; May 4, 6:45 pm, TIFF 3

WHAT WALAA WANTS

Now that her mother has been released from an Israeli prison, young Palestinian Walaa wants to fulfill her dream of joining the Palestinian Security Force. But her lack of discipline and tendency to break rules means she's not exactly an ideal candidate, even apart from being

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female. Director Christy Garland's unprecedented access to the security force makes this a must-see.

May 1, 6 pm, TIFF 2; May 3, 6:15 pm TIFF 2; May 4, 3 pm, Hart House

YOURS IN SISTERHOOD

When Ms Magazine hit the newsstands in the early 70s, it became a powerful force for mainstreaming then feminist ideas considered ultra-radical at the time. Director Irene Lyszig compiles letters to the Ms. editors written decades ago and taps women from the same communities as the writers to read them aloud and comment on their relevance in the age of Trump.

Apr 28, 6:45 pm, TIFF 2; Apr 29, 3:45 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 5, 5:45 pm, Fox

WARRIOR WOMEN

Sometimes one activist can embody the entire decades-long history of a movement. Madonna Thunder Hawk, whose involvement in the American Indian Movement inspired her to found Women of All Red Nations, has been a key figurehead on the protest against the Dakota Pipeline at Standing Rock. A testament to resilience, passion and commitment.

Apr 28, 4:15 pm, Isabel Bader; Apr 29, 9 pm, Scotiabank 7; May 5, 3:15 pm, Fox

International Documentary Association – April 19, 2018 (1 of 4)

APRIL 19, 2018

20 IDA-supported Films Screening at Hot Docs

BY SUSAN YIN

The 25th annual Hot Docs Festival is just one week away. If you are headed to Toronto, you can catch a whopping **20** IDA-supported films on the big screen. Our Executive Director, Simon Kilmurry, Director of Programming and Policy, Claire Aguilar, and Filmmaker Services Manager, Toni Bell, will also be in attendance, make sure to say hello!

93Queen

A group of tenacious women are shattering the glass ceiling in their Hasidic Brooklyn neighborhood to create the first all-female volunteer EMS corps in NYC.

Amal

Adolescence in the time of post-revolution Egypt that's shifting around an angry teenager who's turning from an infant into a young woman during an extraordinary context of upheaval and violence.

Bathtubs Over Broadway

When a Late Show with David Letterman writer discovers an old record, it leads to the hysterical revival of "the industrial musical," a ridiculously underappreciated art form that saw the likes of Martin Short, Chita Rivera and more sing the praises of light bulbs and ball bearings.

Behind the Curve

A rapidly rising number of people are convinced that the Earth is flat. Follow the leaders behind this conspiracy theory du jour as they rally to spread their message, challenge scientific proofs and flatten the globe once and for all.

The Blue Wall

Oscar-nominated director Richard Rowley offers a searing examination of the police killing of Laquan McDonald, tracing the conspiracy of silence that extended up to the Chicago mayor's

International Documentary Association – April 19, 2018 (2 of 4)

office and revealing the journalists, activists and lawyers whose perseverance exposed the truth.

Circles

A dedicated high school counsellor in Oakland swaps zero tolerance for restorative justice—but the time, energy and emotion he pours into supporting his at-risk students creates a deep rift in his relationship with his own teenaged son.

Crime + Punishment

Follow 12 NYPD cops as they risk their reputations, careers and safety to blow the whistle on unchecked corruption in the police force and the illegal summons and arrest quotas that target minorities in low-income neighbourhoods.

The Devil We Know

Citizen activists unravel one of the largest environmental scandals of our time when West Virginian residents discover DuPont has been dumping a toxic chemical into the water supply—one that's now found in the blood of over 99% of Americans.

The Feeling of Being Watched

When a filmmaker investigates rumours of surveillance in her Arab-American neighbourhood in Chicago, she uncovers one of the largest FBI terrorism probes conducted before 9/11 and reveals its enduring impact on the community.

I'm Leaving Now (Ya Me Voy)

After scraping by in Brooklyn for 16 years, an undocumented worker plans to return to Mexico, but secret betrayals have warped the family he remembers and an unexpected romance makes him reconsider his path in this deeply intimate story.

Inventing Tomorrow

Roused by the issues faced by their own communities, brilliant young minds from around the globe gather in Los Angeles for the world's largest high school science fair, tackling environmental crises with ingenuity, inspiration and hope.

International Documentary Association – April 19, 2018 (3 of 4)

Laila at the Bridge

Roused by the issues faced by their own communities, brilliant young minds from around the globe gather in Los Angeles for the world's largest high school science fair, tackling environmental crises with ingenuity, inspiration and hope.

Minding the Gap

Escaping their volatile families, three young men in America's Rust Belt form a deep-seated bond over the course of a decade, but it becomes sharply tested by the sudden demands of adulthood and the shared past that still haunts them.

More Human Than Human

With artificial intelligence potentially on track to surpass human capabilities within the next two decades, one filmmaker tests his own job security by building a robot to replace himself and discovers the truth of what's really at stake.

Mr. Soul!

Go backstage with the first all-Black variety show broadcast nationally on PBS, and meet its openly gay host, who was instrumental in ushering radical Black talent into American living rooms in the wake of the civil rights movement.

Netizens

Systematically silenced and terrorized by anonymous harassers, three women—among the many millions for whom the internet is a battleground—attempt to seek justice and spread awareness, taking back their power and their lives in the process.

Nothing Without Us: The Women Who Will End AIDS

From the US to Africa, the 30-year-old HIV/AIDS pandemic still disproportionately plagues women as its surrounding issues and policies keep them perpetually at risk and sick. Follow the brave women in this rousing film who are fighting to end the crisis.

Roll Red Roll

When a girl is raped in a sleepy Ohio town by members of the beloved high school football team, a veil of silence, complicity and denial descends until a whistle-blowing blogger exposes the truth, catapulting rape culture into national headlines.

Witkin & Wiktin

Despite being identical twins, a renowned photographer and his brother, a painter, couldn't be more different. This intensely human story explores their divergent art practices and complex relationship as they reach a crossroads in their lives.

Won't You Be My Neighbor

Mr. Rogers created a neighbourhood in which he connected with children through honesty, directness and love, while delicately introducing complex social issues. His work continues to resonate today, but have we failed to become the neighbours he hoped for?

Toronto's Hot Docs Celebrates 25 Years of Truth-Telling Documentaries

By [Robert Ham](#)
[@roberthamwriter](#)



CREDIT: COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

When Hot Docs, the documentary film festival held annually in Toronto, staged its first event back in 1994, the program presented a mere 21 features, including the Noam Chomsky profile “Manufacturing Consent” and Nick Broomfield’s “Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer.”

From the humble beginning, this celebration of nonfiction short subjects and features has become the largest of its kind, and one of the most internationally recognized, receiving 3,000 submissions from across the globe for possible inclusion in the 2018 event.

“We’re in the golden age of documentary, and we’re seeing that in the volume of films submitted,” says Hot Docs director of programming Shane Smith, “but also the range and quality of the stories being told. I never have trouble finding films for the festival. The problem is deciding on the final selection because of the number of quality films that we see.”

This year’s Hot Docs, which runs from April 26 through May 6, boasts over 200 films, which will be screened at 13 venues around the city. It’s an impressive program that includes much-anticipated releases including the international premiere of “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?,” a film that looks at the life and legacy of beloved children’s TV personality Mr. Rogers, and new features from Academy Award-nominated documentarians Liz Garbus (“What Happened, Miss Simone?”), Richard Rowley (“Dirty Wars”), and Louie Psihoyos (who won the Oscar in 2010 for “The Cove”).

The programmers for the festival are also continuing their efforts to reflect the major storylines happening around the world. One key example is their world premiere of “Active Measures,” a potentially explosive documentary from Jack Bryan that takes a deep dive into Russia’s

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espionage program and the effect it may have had on the 2016 U.S. presidential election. As well, Hot Docs is highlighting films which amplify the rising volume of female voices against

oppression, sexual violence and harassment everywhere from the Minnesota House of Representatives to Afghanistan.

“These films really speak to women’s roles in the world and women’s place in the world,” says Smith, “and how that’s being challenged around the world at this point in time.”

The growth and reach of Hot Docs has been one of the more impressive cultural success stories of the past quarter-century. Founded in 1993 by the Documentary Organization of Canada, the event was initially intended as a place for filmmakers from the 10 provinces to share their work and support one another’s efforts. But as its reach and scope has grown, the festival and its accompanying outreach initiative have become fixtures in the Canadian cultural landscape. This includes the Hot Docs Showcase, which helps bring documentaries to theaters and festivals throughout Canada, and Docs for Schools, a program of free screenings held for students around Ontario.

Most impressively, Hot Docs is proving how hungry Ontario’s cinephiles are for interesting documentaries all year round. In 2014, they launched the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a theater dedicated to presenting nonfiction films and a tasteful smattering of fiction fare.

“Toronto audiences are very sophisticated,” Hot Docs executive director Brett Hendrie says. “They’re very international in their outlook and are very interested in stories from around the world. And I think that they have an affinity for the subject matter that we show, whether that’s social justice or human rights or culture or the environment. That has really helped us cultivate an audience on a year-round basis.”

Hot Docs is also keeping a sharp eye on the future of documentary storytelling. Toward the end of the festival, organizers hold a forum that allows directors to pitch their nonfiction films to potential funders or nab distribution deals for finished work. And this summer, they will hold a pair of day camps for young Canadians interesting in entering the world of documentary filmmaking.

There’s also a fascinating spotlight being given to non-traditional documentary formats in this year’s Hot Docs schedule. Titled Doc X, this program will feature a live performance by Toronto filmmaker Kelly O’Brien of her slideshow project “Postings From Home,” and a video installation from German artist Philip Scheffner that uses a clip of a boat full of refugees traveling a waterway to seek asylum in Europe. Things get even more immersive with an array of virtual reality work that takes viewers to the melting glaciers of Greenland, the Olympic National Forest, a high school wheelchair basketball game and beyond.

“One of the things I love about documentaries is how malleable a form it is,” Smith says. “I think VR and interactive experiences are of interest to filmmakers to be able to reinforce that connection and build that sense of empathy.” <https://variety.com/2018/film/festivals/torontos-hot-docs-celebrates-25-years-of-truth-telling-documentaries-1202768318/>

At Toronto's Hot Docs festival, a distinctly female gaze

KATE TAYLOR

PUBLISHED APRIL 20, 2018



Canadian Maya Gallus, whose *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* (pictured) opens this year's Hot Docs festival, says of documentary filmmaking: 'The budget is lower, more manageable. Smaller crews are required; it's more portable.'

It's hard for a woman to ride a bike in Afghanistan. It's hard for a woman to run a three-star restaurant in France. And it's hard for a woman to win political office in the United States. Inequality, prejudice and harassment hamper them all. It is becoming easier, however, for women to make documentaries telling you that.

As the 25th annual Hot Docs festival launches Thursday, it can boast that it has achieved gender equity: half of the films in the 242-film program were directed by women. Men occupy a large majority of the key creative roles in both Hollywood and in Canada's much smaller film industry, but the ease with which Hot Docs has achieved a better balance – last year, 48 per cent of the films in the festival were made by women – is not entirely surprising: Documentary is a more welcoming arena than feature film, and both men and women are pouring into it.

"We are in a bit of a golden age for documentary; there are so many platforms, so many people watching documentaries, and funding documentaries, seeing commercial opportunities in them," said Shane Smith, director of programming for the festival. As his programming team seeks out diversity of cultural backgrounds, a variety of viewpoints and a balance of genders amongst filmmakers, it has found no shortage of material. This year, the programmers screened about 3,000 films – they are selecting less than 10 per cent of what is submitted.

"There was so much strong work from male and female filmmakers. We always have to turn down work we like. If the work didn't justify it, we weren't going to do it," Smith said, adding gender equity "wasn't a big leap or a big stretch."

Partly, this is because funding organizations have become aware of the issue and are making commitments to gender equity: Half of the directors making work for the National Film Board of

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Canada in 2017 to 2018 are women, while Telefilm, the federal film-funding agency, has also achieved balance in its under-\$2.5-million category (where docs would fall).

Also, Smith speculates, it is because women are well-represented amongst the programmers and funding executives who decide what gets money and what gets shown: Two-thirds of his programming team is female and the festival's Doc Mogul Award winner this year is Cara Mertes, who heads film funding for the Ford Foundation in the United States and has worked previously programming docs at both PBS and the Sundance Festival.

But mainly, women are making documentaries because the barrier to entry is lower than in feature filmmaking, so it is easier for them to break in.

"Non-fiction is not where money or power lies traditionally," Mertes said in an e-mail exchange with the Globe. Documentary as a practice is notoriously unprofitable, relies heavily on government and foundation funding where available, has fractured distribution systems and comparatively few marketing dollars. ... The numbers of female non-fiction makers remain significantly higher than female fiction makers, and they represent the highest levels of the craft."

That matches the observations of Canadian filmmaker Maya Gallus, whose documentary *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*, opens the festival: "The budget is lower, more manageable. Smaller crews are required; it's more portable."

She also suggests that more women may enter the field because it offers saner hours for anybody who is trying to raise a family while working in film. "There is that parallel to the culinary industry: women running smaller restaurants are sometimes doing that by choice. They are seeking work-life balance."

Gallus's culinary film, which follows several female chefs as they rise in the male-dominated restaurant business, seems a particularly apt way to launch a festival in which half of the directors are women – and for which the audience, by the way, can be expected to be two-thirds female.

A tempting entry in the always-popular category of docs about food and restaurants, *The Heat* looks at how several high-profile women are faring in the traditionally male role of chef, and includes revealing interviews with Anne-Sophie Pic, the only woman to run a three-Michelin-star restaurant in France, and Angela Hartnett, a protégé of Gordon Ramsay, who runs the high-end *Murano* in London, as well as chefs in Toronto and New York.

The 2018 festival lineup also includes a retrospective of the work of Barbara Kopple, the American documentarian whose 1976 documentary about a coal miners' strike, *Harlan County, U.S.A.*, is considered a classic of the genre.

Otherwise, the festival is its usual smorgasbord of offerings, political and personal, timely and timeless, made by both men and women – with one important addition: a program entitled *Silence Breakers* that gathers together films about women challenging discrimination or abuse.

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That is where you'll find *Afghan Cycles*, about the young women braving disapproval and harassment – and potentially risking their own security – to join Afghanistan's small but determined national women's cycling team. It also includes *Time for Ilhan*, a documentary about the election campaign of Ilhan Omar, a Muslim woman who conquered Islamophobia to win a seat in the Minnesota House of Representatives, becoming the highest-level Somali-American public official. Another particularly topical entry in the program is *Netizens*, about three American women battling online harassment of such shocking proportions it threatens their livelihoods, their freedom of movement and their physical safety.

A selection like this, full of stories of female empowerment, might seem the obvious outcome of gender equity at the festival, but filmmakers and programmers can't really say how the documentary realm is changed by the presence of more female filmmakers. Perhaps there is a particular emphasis on personal or intimate stories, following the old feminist truism that the personal is political – but Smith points out strong documentary film is often produced by a personal connection to the subject, whoever the filmmaker is.

Perhaps there will simply be a wider variety of stories.

"What is so magical about film is that we are looking to see ourselves reflected on screen and the greater diversity of stories that are being reflected the more people will be able to see themselves instead of this limited versions of what narrative is supposed to be," Gallus said. "I want everyone to see this is what is possible in terms of women's lives, not just the wife, the mother, the girlfriend, the silent sister, supporting the strong male narratives."

If there is some more specific style, some particularly female way of making films that emerges, you'll have to wait to find out. "Ask me after the festival," Smith says .

Gallus, meanwhile, may provide her answer when her next doc appears. It considers women on both sides of the camera and is titled *A Female Gaze*.

Ten of the buzziest festival films coming to Hot Docs

These docs have been making waves at Sundance and other fests ahead of their Toronto premieres

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

APRIL 20, 2018

6:30 AM



United Skates looks at the impact of roller rinks on African-American culture.

UNITED SKATES

Racism in America is a big topic in documentaries and in the media in general, but first-time directors Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown broach the issue with an unexpected angle: roller skating. Though they've been closing down, the venues have been the focal point of underground culture and family-friendly fun for African-Americans for decades. The doc, which was exec produced John Legend, is arriving at Hot Docs following a buzzy premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival.

April 28, 9 pm, Scotiabank 3; April 30, 1 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; May 4, 9:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

BISBEE '17

Robert Greene has become both a critical favourite and polarizing figure in the documentary world thanks to films like *Fake It So Real*, *Actress* and *Kate Plays Christine*, which have used staged situations to explore the nature of performance in non-fiction. *Bisbee '17*, which debuted

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at Sundance, continues that theme, but is more epic in scope. Greene followed a handful of diverse citizens living in the Arizona town Bisbee who decided to re-enact a suppressed

historical tragedy from 100 years prior: when local authorities conspired with mining execs to kidnap more than 1,000 striking workers at gunpoint and deport them to the middle of a New Mexico desert with nowhere to go.

April 27, 2:45 pm, Hart House; April 30, 11:30 am, Scotiabank 7; May 4, 5 pm, Scotiabank 3

OF FATHERS AND SONS

Talal Derki is probably one of the buzzier names with a film at this year's Hot Docs. The follow-up to his award-winning Syrian war doc, *The Return To Homs*, picked up the Grand Jury Prize for World Cinema Documentary at Sundance earlier this year. For his sophomore feature, the exiled Berlin-based Syrian director posed as a war photographer in order to return to his home country and intimately document the lives of a jihadist family fighting as part of the shadowy Al-Nusra rebel group.

April 27, 3:45 pm, Isabel Bader; April 28, 10:15 am, TIFF 2; May 5, 5:30 pm, Scotiabank 3

ROLL RED ROLL

Nancy Schwartzman revisits one of the most high-profile and contentious sexual assault stories of recent years in *Roll Red Roll*: the Steubenville high school rape case from 2012, which gained international attention thanks in part to the role social media played in documenting the crime. The director spent four years looking into the story and the resulting film is told from the point of view of the boys who were involved. Given the heated debates around masculinity online of late, the doc is especially timely. One of the buzziest docs playing at Tribeca, Hot Docs is the film's second stop on the festival circuit.

April 29, 8:45 pm, Hart House; May 1, 11:45 am, Hart House; May 6, 6 pm, Isabel Bader

CALL HER GANDA

PJ Raval's doc, which sold-out its first three screenings at Tribeca, goes behind the media storm and high-profile court case that ensued in the Philippines after a U.S. Marine murdered 26-year-old trans woman Jennifer Laude in 2014. The film follows a group of women that fought to draw attention to gender-based violence and the agreement between the Philippine

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government and visiting U.S. forces that essentially allows American officers to break local law with impunity.

April 28, 9: 15 pm, Isabel Bader; April 29, 3:45 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; May 6, 5:45 pm, Scotiabank 3

CRIME + PUNISHMENT

Stephen Maing won an award for social-impact filmmaking at Sundance for this film about 12 New York City cops pushing back against systemic racism. The director had been working on Crime + Punishment for years, but in the wake of a 2013 U.S. federal court ruling that blocked reforms to the force's controversial "stop-and-frisk" policy, more Black and Latino officers decided to appear on camera in order to speak out against quota arrests. That gave Maing an unprecedented level of access as the outspoken officers faced internal retaliation. Though the film was completed and premiered in January, their cases remain ongoing.

May 3, 6 pm, TIFF 1; May 4, 12:45 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; May 5, 8:45 pm, TIFF 1

LOVE, SCOTT

Laura Marie Wayne's film about a Nova Scotia man paralyzed from the waist down after a homophobic attack arrives at Hot Docs following its debut at London's LGBTQ film fest BFI Flare. When Scott Jones was stabbed outside a club in 2013, the incident made national headlines. And though his assailant was jailed, the fact that police never considered the incident a hate crime has left Jones, who now works as a motivational speaker, musician and choral conductor in Toronto, unable to find peace. Given the focus on police failing to protect marginalized communities in the wake of the Bruce McArthur case, this doc feels especially timely. Jones is also the honoured guest at Toronto Pride this June.

April 28, 6:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; April 29, 10:15 am, Isabel Bader; May 3, 9:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

MINDING THE GAP

Newcomer Bing Liu won the U.S. Documentary Competition Jury Award for breakthrough filmmaking at Sundance for this coming-of-age film about three teenage skateboarders in Chicago. The production, which started out as an experimental skate video, was backed by

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some major American documentary pedigree: Hoop Dreams and The Interrupters director Steve James, who executive-produced through his influential production company Kartemquin Films.

May 2, 8:15 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 3, 3:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; May 6, 6:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

YELLOW IS FORBIDDEN

Few people knew the name Guo Pei until Rihanna turned up at the Met Gala in 2015 in one of the Chinese designer's creations: a 55-pound dress with a 16-foot train requiring three attendants to accompany her on the red carpet. After that, her ostentatious creations had Europe's fashion glitterati swooning, and she became the second Asian-born designer to be an invited guest of France's Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture. New Zealand director Pietra Brettkelly (The Art Star And The Sudanese Twins) scored access to the couturier as she prepared to make her Paris debut in 2016. The doc arrives in Toronto fresh from its Tribeca world premiere.

April 30, 6:15 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 1, 10 am, TIFF Lightbox 1; May 6, 12:30 pm, TIFF Lightbox 1

A WOMAN CAPTURED

Another daring doc that screened at Sundance is Bernadett Tuza-Ritter's debut feature about a woman named Marish who was kept as a slave for more than a decade in small-town Hungary. The production could not have been more intimate: using a cover story, the director managed to infiltrate the home in order to film her subject working as an unpaid housekeeper and then plotting her escape to freedom. Seems like one of the more intense experiences to be had at Hot Docs this year.

May 1, 6 pm, Innis Town Hall; May 3, 10:30 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 3; May 5, 8:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 4

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/features/hot-docs-2018-10-buzzy-festival-films/>

Boy bands: the next generation

By RYAN PORTER

Special to the Star

Fri., April 20, 2018



While Toronto was getting frozen in ice, fairy-tale curse style, last Saturday, school friends Lily Getachew and Michelle Fabjan, both 15, spent nine hours standing outside the Danforth Music Hall, first in line for American boy band Why Don't We.

The teen five-piece was playing its first of two sold-out shows, and Getachew and Fabjan arrived around 9 a.m. in the hopes of being within hand-grasping distance at the general admission show.

Michelle discovered Why Don't We on Instagram Explore last year, though she was familiar with band member Daniel Seavey from his top 10 placement on *American Idol* in 2015. Lily knew Zach Herron, her personal favourite, from his cover of Shawn Mendes' "Stitches," a viral smash that garnered a combined 20 million hits on Instagram and Facebook. "Everyone knew that!" she says.

Inside the theatre, the group members — Jonah Marais, 19, from Minnesota; Texan Corbyn Besson, 19; Seavey, 19, from Oregon; Pennsylvania's Jack Avery, 18, and Texan Herron, 16 — grab seats in the balcony.

Each member came to the band with a fan base the size of a small Canadian city: besides Seavey's and Herron's individual successes, Marais and Besson were popular stars on the live video-streaming site YouNow, and Avery had a following singing Ed Sheeran covers on YouTube. Jon Lucero, an impresario for the social-media set, brought them together for a hang in Los Angeles, where they played the FIFA soccer video game in their underwear and ate powdered grocery-store doughnuts.

That was in 2016. They've since released five EPs, including last fall's *Invitation*, which topped the iTunes chart in Canada. Their videos have been viewed over 150 million times on YouTube in two years, roughly double the total for the Tragically Hip's entire discography.

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As a member of an internet-famous supergroup, Marais appreciates how different his position is today from when the Beatles' secretary Freda Kelly was serving fans by mailing strands of the Fab Four's hair to them. "I can send a tweet on my phone and it will go to every single one of (the fans') phones," he says.

The intimacy of the connection works both ways. Marais says a fan recently brought him a hat from his childhood baseball team. "They've found your grandma's best friend's former roommate's picture of you on Facebook that you didn't even know existed," Seavey says with a laugh.

Jessica Leski, the Melbourne-based director behind *I Used To Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story*, which will have its world premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs festival on April 26, fears that access pierces the illusion. "Part of the allure of a boy band is what you project onto them," she says.

Leski, 37, understands that appeal. She surprised herself at age 31 by becoming a late-in-life Directioner, as One Direction's fans call themselves.

"With One Direction, to have that enormous fandom online and interacting not just with other fans but with the boys directly just felt so huge and different from any other time of being a fan," she says. "You could write love letters to John Lennon but whether he would actually see them, who knows? You could tweet at Harry Styles and, especially early on, it felt like there was a chance that he could see it."

One of Leski's subjects in the doc is Dara, a Take That superfan who outlines some shared characteristics of boy bands: they should be between the ages of 17 and 21 with three to five members, covering archetypical personalities including "the mysterious one," "the sexy one," "the cute one," "the older-brother type," and — sorry, AJ McLean — "the forgotten one." She considers dancing and colour-co-ordinated outfits to be canon, though One Direction broke with those traditions.

Some facial hair is OK; beards are not. Why Don't We has dutifully fulfilled these criteria, though there's no formal ban on beards. "When I *can* grow a beard, I probably will," Seavey says.

With One Direction disbanding in 2016, could it be too soon to revive the boy band cycle again? Leski doesn't think so. "Once they become men, it changes," Leski says.

"Two of them (Liam Payne and Louis Tomlinson) have children! Why would someone who is 12 feel love for someone who already has a child?"

Already filling that boy band gap is Korea's thriving K-pop scene, which has lured fans away from English-speaking pop idols, especially the wildly successful BTS, who will release a new album next month called *Love Yourself: Tear*.

Toronto Star – April 20, 2018 (3 of 3)

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It's a reminder that ever since the Beatles were wearing matching suits and singing "I Want to Hold Your Hand" on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, there have been scowling adults who don't get it.

"As an outsider, you look at it and think, that's not as good," Leski says. "But for (teenagers today) it's going to be the biggest thing ever."

Boy bands: The next generation

Why Don't We provide an up-to-date snapshot of the state of a 50-year-old formula

Apr 20, 2018 by Ryan Porter Waterloo Region Record

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<https://www.thespec.com/whatson-story/8560250-boy-bands-the-next-generation/>

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The Record.com – April 20, 2018 (2 of 3)

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The Reckoning heading to Hot Docs festival

Apr 20, 2018 by Victoria Ahearn The Canadian Press

TORONTO — Just six months after the Harvey Weinstein scandal broke and triggered a flood of sexual misconduct allegations as well as the #MeToo and Time's Up movements, a Canadian documentary examining the saga is set to make its debut.

"The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret," directed by Montreal-born doc maker Barry Avrich and produced by Melissa Hood of Toronto, will screen April 28 and May 5 as part of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

"The purpose of the film was to immortalize a debate and a time in history, an era, in the face of social media that is, I think in a lot of ways, undermining a lot of the accusations," said Avrich, whose other projects include the 2011 documentary "Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project."

"Because the cycle happens so quickly that you don't have enough time to debate, the public is getting bored, so how do you keep the debate going? That was the purpose for the film: to immortalize this debate and the conversation, affect change."

Billed as "a definitive film about the abuse of power in a complicit culture," the doc has interviews with several actresses who've come forward with sexual misconduct allegations against Weinstein, filmmaker James Toback and others. Those actresses include Katherine Kendall and Melissa Sagemiller.

It also has interviews with journalists, agents, psychologists, former Miramax employees and lawyers as it looks at the debates surrounding such allegations, the impact of these cases, and the systemic and cultural issues leading to harassment.

Also among the interviewees is Dylan Farrow, filmmaker Woody Allen's adopted daughter who alleges he molested her in an attic in 1992 when she was 7. Allen has long denied the allegations and was investigated but not charged.

Hood said Farrow's story "highlights some of the contradictions and the complexities" of the Time's Up movement when it comes to supporting certain alleged victims and not others, or separating the art from the artist.

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Also featured in the doc is Toronto lawyer Marie Henein, who represented former CBC radio star Jian Ghomeshi in a high-profile sexual assault case. Ghomeshi was found not guilty.

Henein is now representing a Toronto actress suing Weinstein for sexual assault. The allegations have not been tested in court.

Hot Docs review: Barbara Rubin And The Exploding NY Underground

Chuck Smith's doc shows how a young woman changed the culture by influencing Warhol, Dylan, Ginsberg, Reed and others

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 20, 2018

5:06 PM



BARBARA RUBIN AND THE EXPLODING NY UNDERGROUND (Chuck Smith, US). 78 minutes.

Rating: NNNN

Barbara Rubin And The Exploding NY Underground makes a pretty good argument that the single most important person in American culture in the early 60s was a young woman who showed up in Manhattan, got a job with experimental filmmaker **Jonas Mekas** and wound up influencing not just her mentor but also Andy Warhol, Bob Dylan, Allen Ginsberg, Lou Reed and countless others.

Rubin was 17 years old when she met Mekas; just a few years later, she abandoned it all for a life as far removed from the Factory scene as one can imagine. But while she was active in New York, she changed the course of the culture – bringing Warhol to the first Velvet Underground show, introducing Dylan to Jewish mysticism and making a sexually graphic short film, *Christmas On Earth*, that served as a feminist counterpoint to Jack Smith's far better known *Flaming Creatures*.

It's a hell of a ride, and director **Chuck Smith** lays out Rubin's trajectory and her art in vivid detail, contextualizing a wealth of archival footage with present-day testimonials from her family and friends (including film critic **Amy Taubin**) and Rubin's own letters, read by **Claire Jamison**.

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The result is a portrait of an artist determined to make the most of every last artistic impulse – even if that meant pitching Walt Disney on a pornographic sequel to Christmas On Earth that she believed would expand the minds of anyone who saw it. She just needed a little help with the animation.

Hot Docs review: Siblings

Audrey Gordon's film about siblings separated by foster homes who reunite annually is small, lyrical and often beautiful

BY RADHEYAN SIMONPILLAI

APRIL 20, 2018

5:01 PM



SIBLINGS (Audrey Gordon, France). 63 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Audrey Gordon's small, lyrical, fly-on-the-wall doc drops in on a summer camp where siblings separated by foster homes reunite annually.

The children, from adolescents to verging on adult, soak up everything they missed in the year together, whether it's a birthday cake, impromptu dance-off or aimless but comforting wandering. The film doesn't hang on their unfortunate circumstances, nor does it try to impose any meaning beyond a clever structure that's aware of how fleeting time can be.

But within that time, Gordon collects moments between these kids and sees something beautiful in the unique connections they make.

May 3, 6 pm, Scotiabank 7; May 4, 3:15 pm, Scotiabank 7; May 5, 12:30 pm, Fox Theatre

#HOTDOCS25 MUST SEE: GOLDEN DAWN GIRLS IS A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT THE FRAGILITY OF DEMOCRACY

AUTHOR SARAH SAHAGIAN
POSTED ON APRIL 20, 2018

They say behind every great man is a great woman. But what about evil men? Who are the women who love and work with them? Norwegian documentarian Håvard Bustnes takes on this question in his doc, *Golden Dawn Girls*, a contender at this year's [Hot Docs Film Festival](#). The film tells the story of the women who led Greece's ultranationalist Golden Dawn party to unprecedented victories.

If you watch the nightly news, you've probably seen stories about Golden Dawn. It can be easy, as we sit here in Toronto or Vancouver, to take on an air of superiority—to act as if the existence of such extreme right-wing politics is a problem to which we are immune. But *Golden Dawn Girls* doesn't allow viewers to comfort themselves with such naïve attitudes. By introducing you to the women behind this movement, the doc refuses to let you say, "Those people are not like me." Because the women of *Golden Dawn Girls* look like your neighbour, dress like your sister, and love their pets as much as your cousin. But they're also your (sometimes) friendly neighbourhood fascists.

The film's inciting force is the imprisonment of the party's top male leaders. In the run up to Greece's 2015 federal election, prosecutors charged several of the Golden Dawn male party's leaders with organizing criminal activity and sent them to jail to await trial. The men's wives, mothers and daughters were the only ones left to keep their hateful cause alive. And keep it alive they did.

Bustnes' film goes behind the headlines to examine the psychology of the women devoted to this party. It combines disturbing footage of violent protests with interviews with the women behind the Golden Dawn party who flatly deny such violence occurred. Like Donald Trump or Kellyanne Conway, the women believe they are the targets of "fake news" and a bias media.

Most notably, the doc introduces us to Ourania Michaloliakos, daughter of Golden Dawn founder Nikolaos Michaloliakos. When we meet her, Ourania presents as a mild-mannered

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twenty-something who looks younger than her years. A fan of Freud, she's working towards a graduate degree in psychology. Constantly pictured petting or walking her dog, Ourania could pass for a humanitarian if you met her briefly. What could be less threatening than a graduate student who loves puppies? Simply put, Ourania resembles someone you'd follow on Pinterest. Except, as *Golden Dawn Girls* proves, looks can be deceiving: Ourania is a member of a fascist movement that proclaims immigrants have no place in modern Greece, a movement where politicians assault their political opponents on television!

When her father is jailed, twenty-six-year-old Ourania transforms into the Golden Dawn's top advocate. Raised by a father who openly poses with swastikas, Ourania thrives when forced to run his world of racist politics. Hateful xenophobia is her "normal." With the help of other female Golden Dawn members, Ourania increases the party's presence in parliament. By the end of the 2015 election, they have achieved their goal of becoming the third largest party in Greece.

Bustnes' documentary brings to mind the work of philosopher Hannah Arendt. Arendt spent her career studying the so-called banality of evil: how evil becomes normalized. All that is required to turn the tide is for enough people to start believing the most unconscionable beliefs are, in fact, good. This is why the innocuous-looking, conventionally dressed women of the Golden Dawn are such good ambassadors for evil, because at first glance, they could blend in with your favourite teachers from middle school. As Bustnes demonstrates, it can be difficult to identify a fascist.

With their disapproval of interracial marriage and a penchant for white supremacy, Golden Dawn is working to normalize the oppression of minorities in its native Greece. Party members openly chant, "Fuck the Jews" at allies, joke about deporting their political enemies, and kick people of colour as they walk down the street. Officially, Golden Dawn rejects the label of "Nazi," but one wonders where they derive the moral authority to do so.

As the film illustrates, the greatest tragedy of the rise of Golden Dawn is how Greek voters ought to know better. This is the same country that was occupied and oppressed by Nazis during World War II, yet Golden Dawn supporters have no empathy for the people they

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persecute. They insist Greece should be for the Greeks, suggesting Jews and people of colour are somehow anathema to that community.

Of course, the conflation of citizenship with race is not unique to Golden Dawn. Donald Trump was elected to the American presidency whilst spewing hate against Mexicans and Muslims.

And xenophobia has taken such a hold of Great Britain that they voted to leave the European Union. It is upsetting how banal evil has become in countries that are meant to value freedom and democracy.

Golden Dawn Girls is a cautionary tale about the fragility of democracy. It warns us, the Canadian electorate, of the evils that happen when bigotry goes mainstream. It is a call to action that reminds anti-racist feminists that we cannot afford to be politically disengaged. We cannot afford to pretend we in Canada are morally superior, to sit back and believe our community is somehow immune to fascism. Fascists won't take a break from politics, and feminists cannot afford to either.

Please take the time to see this documentary and remind yourself how important it is to preserve democracy. *Golden Dawn Girls* is nothing if not an important movie.

<http://www.shedoesthecity.com/hotdocs25-must-see-golden-dawn-girls-cautionary-tale-fragility-democracy>

Festival Reviews – April 20, 2018

HOT DOCS 2018: THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS (USA 2018) ***

April 20, 2018 festreviews 2018 movies, movie, Movie Review, UncategorizedEddy Galland, film reviews, gilbert seah, Ron Guttman, Silvi Alzetta-Realì, THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS, Tim Wardle

Director: Tim Wardle

Stars: Silvi Alzetta-Realì, Eddy Galland, Ron Guttman

The doc, THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS opens in the year 1980 when 19-year-olds Robert Shafran and Edward Galland found each other at the same community college and realized they were twins separated at birth. To each other's surprise, they discover a third. Triplets at birth finding each other is news.

The surprise triplets became fast friends and overnight media sensations. Can the happiness last forever? Every story eventually has a dark side. The dark side involves the discovery at the adoption agency that the triplets (as are other twins) were part of an experiment conducted on human behaviour. The film's best part is the insight given by a few of the interviewees.

One, a lady who worked at the adoption research centre gives her opinion that it was not considered inappropriate in those days to do experiments of this kind. Psychology was new and in, and it was a cool subject then, not like today.

A documentary is often as good as its subject. As far as Wardle's documentary goes, what other film could have topped this with a more intriguing subject. THREE IDENTICAL STRANGERS will eventually be praised as a film despite its glaring flaws. One wishes that more conclusion would have been presented regarding the experiments

Panic Manual – April 20, 2018

Hot Docs Preview: Anotes Ark (2018, Matthieu Rytz)

Anote's Ark is a beautifully shot documentary about the effect of rising sea levels on the South Pacific island of Kiribati. Situated in the Pacific near the equator, Kiribati is a nation that comprises of numerous atolls and islands. These islands are only a few meters above sea levels and are currently in danger of being wiped off the face of the Earth with rising sea levels and change in weather patterns.

The film primarily follows two individuals – the president of Kiribati and a mother. While the president furiously travels the globe seeking a solution to his island's problems, the mother has to evaluate things on a much more personal level, assessing how to care for her family as her home gets continually flooded. Not really mentioned in the film are the economical factors that would drive citizens to travel abroad for work.

The film is a stark reminder of the natural powers of the Earth and provides great insight into how climate change can greatly affect people in other areas of the world instead of just being a minor nuisance.

Check it out.

Wed, May 2 @ 10:15 AM TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

Fri, May 4 @ 1:00 PM TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Documentary Film Festival Hot Docs a Bonanza of Titles for the Conscious-Minded

By [Kim Hughes](#) | www.samaritanmag.com

Posted on April 22, 2018



Pictured Scott Jones and sister Sherise, Love, Scott is about a young gay musician's brave recovery after a vicious attack left him paralyzed — photo courtesy of Hot Docs.

Like non-fiction books, documentaries have at least one very distinct advantage over their fictional filmic counterparts: even so-so docs send viewers away having learned something new. That's certainly not something a middling rom-com can claim.

This year's instalment of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival — Hot Docs for short — is once again poised to inform, educate, delight, and dazzle while underscoring that old chestnut that truth really is stranger than fiction. Happening in Toronto April 26 to May 6, Hot Docs (this year fêteing its 25th anniversary) has a crazy-broad slate of films sure to inspire the conscious among us.

That this year's festival will present 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries in 14 screening programs, with work by female filmmakers representing 50 per cent, augurs well for its success both commercially and, more tangentially perhaps, as an agent of change.

So where to begin in putting together a wish-list of films to see, many enjoying world premieres?

Perusing the Hot Docs site with a mug of java and a spare hour or two is a good place to start. Indeed, almost every title in the 2018 line-up touches a subject that might broadly be categorized as having a charitable (or at least agit-prop) component:

Of Fish and Foe, the story of Scotland's last traditional fishing family battling animal activists on the high seas.

The Blue Wall, a searing examination of the police killing of Laquan McDonald, tracing the conspiracy of silence that extended up to the Chicago mayor's office and revealing the journalists, activists and lawyers whose perseverance exposed the truth.

Active Measures, a deep-dive into Russia's alleged involvement in the 2016 US presidential election.

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Andy Irons: Kissed By God, which profiles the legendary surfing champion and his struggles with mental illness.

Love, Scott, a heart-breaking film about a young gay musician's brave recovery after a vicious attack left him paralyzed.

Commander Arian: A Story Of Women, War And Freedom, whereby a 30-year-old commander on the frontline of the Syrian war leads her female battalion to retake an ISIS-controlled city.

The Feeling of Being Watched, which uncovers one of the largest FBI terrorism probes conducted before 9/11.

The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret, director Barry Avrich's examination of Harvey Weinstein's spectacular fall and the insidious circumstances that allowed him to operate for so long.

Exit Music, a look at Ethan Rice who was born with cystic fibrosis and has been preparing to die all his life. Interweaving his father's home videos and his own original music and animation, the film captures death's transformative influence.

Call Her Ganda, exploring the case of a U.S. Marine who brutally murdered a transgender woman in the Philippines, thrusting transphobia and American military impunity into the spotlight.

The Accountant of Auschwitz, which follows the 2015 trial of 94-year-old Oskar Gröning, known as the "Accountant of Auschwitz," who was charged with the murder of 300,000 Jews during WWII.

The Guardians, an exposé on the rampant corruption that has transformed Nevada's guardianship system into a con game where seniors invariably lose money and well-being.

Blowin' Up, a vérité look inside an experimental "special intervention" court, created in NYC to help sex workers escape an unjust cycle of arrests.

Phew! Note that Hot Docs offers free same-day tickets for all screenings before 5 pm to seniors and students with valid photo I.D. at the venue box offices. For the rest of us, tickets can be purchased in person, online at www.hotdocs.ca, or by phone at 416-637-3123.

Single tickets to screenings are \$17 each, and \$19 - \$24 each to special events. Tickets to Food & Film are \$60-\$75. A Festival 6-Pack is \$99, a Festival 10-Pack is \$149, a Festival 20-Pack is \$249, and a Premium Pass is \$359

<https://www.samaritanmag.com/news/documentary-film-festival-hot-docs-bonanza-titles-conscious-minded>

22 movies to watch at Hot Docs

By **BRUCE DEMARA** Entertainment Reporter

PETER HOWELL Movie Critic

RAJU MUDHAR Staff Reporter

Sun., April 22, 2018

A quarter-century after Toronto's Hot Docs Festival began as a small, mostly inside-industry event, it has become the largest in North America and one of the preeminent fests of its kind in the world for films that explore true stories, memorable personalities, and social, cultural and political events and ideas from all parts of the globe.

At the 25-year mark, Hot Docs has also achieved a laudable and remarkable milestone in gender equality, with half of the more than 200 films on offer made by women filmmakers.

The festival, which runs from April 26 to May 6 this year, has also become a much needed forum for international filmmakers and a much anticipated staple for cinema-loving audiences in Toronto and elsewhere. It's set to sell more than 200,000 tickets at 14 venues across the city, including locations such as the Aga Khan Museum.

The Star's writers reviewed some of the most interesting movies. All ratings are out of four stars. For tickets and more info, visit hotdocs.ca.

ACTIVE MEASURES

For anyone trying to navigate the labyrinth of personalities and events behind the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the last U.S. presidential election, this film is a comprehensive and indispensable primer. It's also riveting and authoritative, quoting impeccable sources in the intelligence and diplomatic community, as well as well-known faces like Hillary Clinton and Senator John McCain, showing the Russians' long history of subverting rival nations and how it pulled off its biggest coup to date, installing Donald Trump as president. (Directed by Jack Bryan.) *Bruce DeMara*

ANOTE'S ARK

Anote Tong, president of Kiribati, in his office in the documentary Anote's Ark. (COURTESY HOT DOCS FESTIVAL)

You've probably never heard of Kiribati, but it's one of a number of Pacific island nations facing imminent submersion and destruction as a result of global warming. Unusual climate events are already causing more than occasional flooding. Fortunately the islanders have an eloquent and impassioned champion in President Anote Tong, who travels the world beseeching and seeking help from other nations. Yet the film's waning moments suggest that hope for this paradise may be lost. (Directed by Matthieu Rytz.) *BD*

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Georg Friedrich Haas is the world's most performed living composer, an Austrian whose parents were Nazi sympathizers. Mollena Williams is a well-known kink educator who grew up in Harlem and Haas's artistic "muse." She wears a collar that defines their master/slave relationship — and what an unexpectedly tender one it is, marked by collaboration and deep emotional bonds that go beyond bondage. The film, directed by Beatrice Behn and René Gebhardt, is surprisingly sweet and instructive (and occasionally naughty). *BD*

THE CLEANERS

In a world where more than 3 billion people are connecting through social media websites, this riveting documentary takes a peak behind the Facebook curtain to reveal the content moderators, "cleaners" who have the Sisyphean task of keeping nudity, child exploitation, hate and other dreck off the internet. For the beleaguered workers in Manila, it's a job that comes with impossible demands in workload and expectations that leave deep psychological scars. Equal parts fascinating and frightening. (Directed by Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck.) *BD*

COMMANDER ARIAN

Arian, the leader of a female fighting unit battling Islamic terrorists in war-torn Syria, cleaning her gun in the documentary *Commander Arian*. (COURTESY HOT DOCS FESTIVAL)

History has not been kind to the Kurds, a people without a country in a troubled region of the world. But they're a tenacious lot as personified by Arian, the leader of a female fighting unit battling Islamic terrorists in war-torn Syria. The film follows Arian before and after she suffers five gunshot wounds. It takes us to the front lines of battle and shows us the camaraderie of courageous women like Arian, who wages a parallel fight to instill a sense of worth in her fellow soldiers. Inspirational in all the right ways. (Directed by Alba Sotorra.) *BD*

DIXIE CHICKS: SHUT UP AND SING

When Dixie Chicks singer Natalie Maines told a London concert audience in 2003 she was "ashamed" of then U.S.-president George W. Bush, she and her country music trio became the object of right-wing hatred across America. But there's no better way than adversity to test a person's mettle, and one of the many remarkable things about this documentary is watching the band evolve both personally and musically. Co-directors Barbara Kopple and Cecilia Peck originally released this doc in 2006, but not much has changed if you consider the people and prejudices behind the rise of current U.S. President Donald Trump. *Peter Howell*

THE GAME CHANGERS

If a vegan diet is good enough for Olympians, ultra-marathoners, ancient Roman gladiators and Arnold Schwarzenegger, then shouldn't the rest of us be eating it, too? So goes the argument of James Wilks, a former MMA fighter turned elite military trainer who practises and preaches the no-meat credo with the enthusiasm of an infomercial pitchman. But he's persuasive, marshalling scientific data and athletic testimonials that strongly suggests carrots are better than carne if you want to up your energy and cut your risk of heart disease and cancer. If that's not enough to

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persuade men to get their hands off their burgers, a urologist pops up to clinically prove that vegetarians achieve better erections than meat lovers. (Directed by Louis Psihoyos.) *PH*

THE HEAT: A KITCHEN (R)EVOLUTION

The world's top chefs, invariably men, have long had a reputation for being "equal opportunity a-holes." Thankfully, Toronto filmmaker Maya Gallus shows us a slew of top women chefs locally, and in the U.S. and Europe who break the mould in so many ways, among them the U.K.'s Angela Hartnett, a protégé of *Hell's Kitchen* hothead Gordon Ramsay. The film gives us women who are intelligent, articulate, hard-working while offering interesting insights into how they run their kitchens in a distinctly female way. *BD*

LAILA AT THE BRIDGE

Laila looking for addicts to help under the infamous bridge in downtown Kabul in the documentary *Laila at the Bridge*. (COURTESY HOT DOCS FESTIVAL)

With 90 per cent of the world's opium production, it's small wonder Afghanistan has a serious drug addiction crisis. Among the few trying to help is Laila, a courageous woman who works with her former addict brother against all odds, including an indifferent patriarchal government (this is, after all, Afghanistan). But watch the tight smiles of squirming government officials when the cameras are on. The ugliness and squalor of the addicts — especially those under the bridge of the title — bring the harsh reality home. (Directed by Elissa Sylvia Mirzaei and Gulistan Mirzaei.) *BD*

LOVE, SCOTT

The film is a sensitive and engaging exploration of the aftermath of the homophobic attack on Scott Jones, a talented young musician in small-town New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, that left him a paraplegic. The community rallies and confronts its own homophobia as the likeable and thoughtful Jones struggles to come to terms with his future — and his fear of ever being alone — as he seeks to find forgiveness for his attacker. A particularly bitter pill to swallow: that the attack was not prosecuted as a hate crime. (Directed by Laura Marie Wayne.) *BD*

MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES

What begins as a portrait of Canadian landscape photographer Edward Burtynsky turns into an astonishing visual indictment of man's inhumanity to Mother Earth, as seen through the documentary prism of Jennifer Baichwal. There's strange and symmetrical beauty in the scenes of environmental abuse caused by factories in China and Bangladesh. The opening tracking shot by cinematographer Peter Mettler through a never-ending factory qualifies as one of the modern era's most startling movie moments. Twelve years after its initial release, it remains a classic film by a Canadian documentary master. *PH*

NETIZENS

Through the compelling stories of three American women, the film makes a solid case that the Digital Age has merely provided misogynist men another sick and effective way to victimize women. Director Cynthia Lowen demonstrates just how onerous and painful it is for women to fight back against their victimizers but offers some hope in the courage and determination of activists and individuals. It's a timely film that ought to summon everyone's outrage. *BD*

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

An image from Russian TV of President Vladimir Putin with U.S. President Donald Trump, part of the documentary *Our New President*. (COURTESY HOT DOCS FESTIVAL)

Fake news with a shot of vodka. Maxim Pozdorovkin's sobering doc shows how avidly — and effectively — Russia's state-run new agencies used hacking and trolling tactics to promote Donald Trump while demonizing his rival Hillary Clinton in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The doc alternately amuses, shocks and enrages, revealing concerted Russian propaganda efforts, backed by Vladimir Putin's state-controlled media, that range from the comically paranoid to the scarily sophisticated. This film has become even more urgent in the months since its Sundance premiere, as it becomes ever more apparent that Russian collusion helped propel Trump to his unlikely electoral victory. It's all fun and games until somebody loses a democracy. *PH*

PLAYING HARD

This film charts the development of the Ubisoft videogame *For Honor* from its inception to launch. Following a few members of the leadership team, it heavily focuses on creative director Jason VandenBerghe, who wanted to make this sword-based fighting game for over a decade, and there is good stuff about a driven artist realizing his dream. It is even better on the too few occasions it shows the nitty gritty and personal cost of game development. (Directed by Jean-Simon Chartier.) *Raju Mudhar*

QUEERCORE: HOW TO PUNK A REVOLUTION

Way back before social media, a group of queer activists cannily created their own "scene" by pretending it already existed. This documentary goes beyond cultural anthropology, exploring how queer activism briefly allied itself to the punk movement before becoming its own movement with the gay liberation movement, rejecting (like punk) all the conventions that growing social acceptance entailed. Filmmakers Bruce LaBruce and John Waters and others provide lively and subversive commentary. (Directed by Yony Leyser.) *BD*

ROLL RED ROLL

Crime blogger Alex Goddard in the documentary *Roll Red Roll*. (COURTESY HOT DOCS FESTIVAL)

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When star members of a high school football team gang-rape an unconscious teen girl, coaches and school officials in Steubenville, Ohio, fall all over themselves to downplay the horrific event — until a whistle-blowing blogger unearths and posts online clues to the crime and tells the world about the churchgoing town's hypocrisy. Nancy Schwartzman's devastating real-life thriller documents a shocking sexual assault in a tight-knit community, and the role of social media in compounding the felony but also helping to solve it. *PH*

RUNNING FROM CRAZY

Mariel Hemingway grew up in the gigantic shadow of a legendary grandfather, novelist Ernest Hemingway. But it comes with loads of baggage, including a family history of mental illness, addiction and suicide. Archival footage supplements the story of Hemingway and her two older sisters, and the toll the Hemingway legacy has exacted upon them. One shocking revelation further darkens the picture. While the film feels a little self-indulgent at times, Hemingway proves to be a worthy protagonist. (Directed by Barbara Kopple.) *BD*

THE SILK AND THE FLAME

Part of the largest annual migration on Earth, Yao returns home every year for the Lunar New Year celebration to visit his family and face the inevitable questions from his dying father, relatives and neighbours: why isn't he married? Shot in black and white, it's an intimate look at family life in a traditional culture, featuring a kind and decent man approaching middle age who's given much to his family yet continues to sacrifice his own happiness to placate them. The cinematography is amazing, the tone sorrowful. (Directed by Jordan Schiele.) *BD*

THE TROLLEY

Riding the Red Rocket in Toronto in the documentary *The Trolley*. (COURTESY HOT DOCS)

Stephen Low's passion for electric streetcars (also known as trams or trolleys) comes through loud, clear and IMAX-sized in this gloriously photographed love letter to the humble transit workhorse. Touring 39 cities in 16 countries, it makes a strong case for the streetcar as a saviour for car-clogged roads and smoke-choked environments, even if many automobile drivers consider them a nuisance. Toronto's enduring passion for the TTC's "Red Rockets" rumbles throughout, but the film risks overselling the message with over-the-top narration. Ignore that and savour the visuals. *PH*

UNITED WE FAN

Bjo and John Trimble, the couple who organized an unprecedented letter-writing campaign to save the original *Star Trek* from cancellation in 1967, in the documentary *United We Fan*. (COURTESY HOT DOCS FESTIVAL)

"What would you say to people who say it's just a TV show?" is the perfect question to ask the many people in *United We Fan*, which is a fun look at many fan campaigns that fought to keep

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their favourite TV shows on the air. Featuring superfans, actors and TV producers, this doc explores the methods that helped save shows like *Star Trek*, *Cagney & Lacey* and many more. (Directed by Michael Sparaga.) *RM*

WHAT WALAA WANTS

What Walaa wants is to become a police officer for the Palestinian Authority. What Canadian filmmaker Christy Garland does is let this true-life story unfold in a naturalistic way, refusing to take sides in the ongoing and intractable Middle East conflict. Walaa grew up in a refugee camp and her mother spent eight years in prison for her role in a botched terrorist attack. But Walaa, who's pugnacious and not always likeable, epitomizes female empowerment as she navigates the obstacles in her path. *BD*

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

Mr. Rogers really was a lot like his iconic television persona, a "square" who believed in goodness, love and the value of positive reinforcement to young children. Filmmaker Morgan Neville delivers a sweet, affecting story about the star of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, which premiered on a local Pittsburgh television station in 1967. The film features archival footage of Rogers, who died in 2003, and interviews with family and the people who worked closely with him. The picture that emerges is of an unlikely hero, a man of uncommon decency and personal faith who led a gently personal crusade to give young audiences a space on TV where they felt loved and accepted. If the film proves anything, it's that a show like his — with almost comically rudimentary sets, hand puppets and unworldly characters — would never survive in the current media age dominated by gratuitous violence and flashy special effects. Brace yourself to be aggrieved and outraged toward the end by loony right-wing commentators who accuse Rogers posthumously of giving generations of youngsters an exaggerated sense of entitlement, and religious nutcases who picketed his funeral. *BD*

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/review/2018/04/22/25-years-after-it-began-the-hot-docs-festival-is-back-with-another-feast-of-fact.html>

Tribeca 2018 Women Directors: Meet Kate Davis — “Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland”

BY Beandrea July April 22, 2018

Kate Davis is an Emmy and Peabody-award winning filmmaker whose film “Southern Comfort” won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance and First Prize at Hot Docs. Her other credits include “The Cheshire Murders,” “The Newburgh Sting,” “Jockey,” and “Stonewall Uprising.”

“Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland” will premiere at the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival on April 25. The film is co-directed by David Heilbroner.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

KD: I might describe “Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland” as part mystery, part political thriller, and all in the context of a strong woman standing up to power. My film tells the story of Sandra Bland, a politically active 28-year-old African American who, after being arrested for a traffic violation in a small Texas town, was found hanging in her jail cell three days later.

Dash cam footage revealing her violent arrest went viral, leading to national protests claiming that this was a case of racially-motivated murder. From the inside, my partner and I followed the two-year case beginning shortly after Sandra’s death, exploring what really happened to this remarkable woman, and what we may learn from her tragedy.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

KD: The death of Sandra was shrouded in mystery and details that seemed to not make sense, making it a story which I felt was ideal for a film. So we followed the plot twists and turns as they unfolded. A clear appeal was also that this is a national case with an enormous built in audience, hungry to learn details behind the news stories and dash cam footage. But I also saw this film as an amazing chance to humanize the “victim” of police over-reach and raise issues regarding racism in law enforcement.

I was also drawn to Sandy’s character. She broke stereotypes of an arrested street person, as she was an educated black woman who knew her rights and felt passionate about standing up for justice, and her own videos bring to light many critical social and systemic problems in a way that few, if any others, have done.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

KD: I hope that the film helps people understand that it is terrifyingly easy for someone to become a victim of police abuse, and that very quickly one’s life can be in jeopardy when encountering the police, especially minorities—but also that not all police are bad, and that we need dialogue between different groups rather than remain in a polarized stand off in order to truly effect change.

I hope that audiences see that racism exists in the cracks of a situation. It is rarely good versus evil, yet we need to call out racism when we see it, and take a humble look at ourselves in the

Women and Hollywood – April 22, 2018 (2 of 2)

process. In Sandra's own words, "We need to understand each other—that's the only way this is going to work."

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

KD: We did not want to simplify the issues which Sandra's story brings up, and it was hard to structure a story which takes in many people's points of view. The film folds in Sandra's family's perspectives, their attorneys, protesters, and even the point of view from Texas law enforcement.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

KD: We had the full support from HBO Documentary Films, which felt strongly that Sandra's story was important to tell. This gave us the freedom to jump in just after the story broke worldwide and follow the case through its conclusion over two years later.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Tribeca Film Festival?

KD: I am excited that our world premiere is at Tribeca, where Sandra Bland's family and lead attorneys will greet the strong New York City film fans and a caring public.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

KD: I was told to just jump in and make films, not wait for everything to feel lined up, which is advice I've passed on to others.

I am not sure about worst advice. Maybe I have amnesia.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

KD: Just believe. All acts of film are kinds of leaps of faith, even for the non-religious. And women perhaps can try to ignore inner voices of doubt and just jump off the cliff.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

KD: Everyone will benefit from having females be more equally represented in the film industry. On so many levels it may help in work environments, help younger women have stronger role models, increase the talent pool, and make for more diverse storytelling.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/tribeca-2018-women-directors-meet-kate-davis-say-her-name-the-life-and-death-of-sandra-bland-ab3c7dd3ecd6/?gi=f9dbf7e705bd>

You Can't Miss These 14 Toronto Festivals That Are Right Around The Corner

It's almost festival season!

Toronto's first-ever festival dedicated to all things poutine is happening this spring at Dundas Square! There will be over 50 different kinds of poutines being sold from different local vendors that are making unique creations just for this event.

Hot Docs International Documentary Festival

When: April 26th-May 6th



This is the largest documentary film festival in all of North America and you definitely don't want to miss it! There will be over 150 cutting edge documentaries screened during this festival from all around the world.

<https://www.narcity.com/ca/on/toronto/things-to-do-in-to/you-cant-miss-these-14-toronto-festivals-that-are-right-around-the-corner>

James Cameron touts veganism over Viagra to raise male awareness and save the planet

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic
Mon., April 23, 2018

Hollywood titan James Cameron wants to save the planet by promoting veganism — and he's happy to begin in the bedroom by raising the sexual benefits for men of a plant-based diet.

"I'd love to put Viagra out of business, just by spreading the word on plant-based eating," Cameron said in an interview from Los Angeles.

The Ontario-born director of *Titanic* and *Avatar* is executive producer of *The Game Changers*, one of the buzz films at the 2018 Hot Docs festival, which runs from Thursday through May 6.

Directed by *The Cove*'s Louie Psihoyos, *The Game Changers* contains a scene that had the audience chortling at the film's Sundance premiere in January and which is likely to do so at its three Hot Docs screenings this coming weekend.

It shows three men in a clinical test conducted by urologist Dr. Aaron Spitz, author of *The Penis Book*, which indicates that they had much better erections after consuming plant-based meals than after meat-based ones. The men wore special devices to monitor penile length and girth.

"I call it the 'peter meter' scene," Cameron said, laughing.

"But it's compelling, because obviously one of the first symptoms of atherosclerosis is erectile dysfunction. And then some of the more severe heart problems tend to follow very quickly."

Cameron knew the scene would be uplifting the moment he heard it, recalled the film's Toronto screenwriter/producer Joseph Pace, in a separate interview.

"When we first told Jim that there are a couple of ways that we could measure the (vegan) difference in terms of erectile function, he was like, 'That's the scene of the film!' And this was years ago. I was in a conference call with him and he said, 'Guys, if you do anything, please film that, trust me!'"

Cameron got his wish and he's delighted. But his main aim in backing *The Game Changers* is to promote the message, to men in particular, that humans don't need to consume animal protein because they can get all they need from plants.



Suzy Amis and James Cameron attend a celebration of sustainable style by honouring Suzy Amis Cameron at Sunset Tower on March 3, 2018 in Los Angeles, California. (TIBRINA HOBSON / GETTY IMAGES)

You might be interested in

The film is like a feature-length testimonial to the benefits of veganism, with Olympic athletes, distance runners and bodybuilders — including Arnold Schwarzenegger — extolling the benefits of a plant-based diet.

Cameron and his wife, Suzy Amis Cameron, switched to a vegan diet six years ago and he says they've never looked back. Suzy is preparing a book for release this fall titled *OMD: Add One Plant-Based Meal Every Day to Save Your Health, Save Your Waistline, Save the Planet*.

They're serious about saving the Earth, Cameron said, adding that the global consumption of meat and dairy products has to cease if human beings hope to survive past the middle of this century. Much of global warming, he said, is caused by the production of meat and dairy products.

"I believe in it completely," Cameron said of veganism.

"More than that, I think that if we don't make a major shift as a civilization, and I mean that globally, toward planet-based eating, we're just not going to make it. Certainly, our quality of life will be a small fraction of what it is now, 30 or 50 years from now. We can't keep consuming Earth like we've got four more of them standing behind it."

Men are the toughest sell for the pro-vegan argument, Cameron said, because they're hard-wired to believe that strength comes from eating meat. He hopes *The Game Changers* will have as big an impact on public attitudes as Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* did in sounding the alarm about global warming.

"Success for me (with the film) would be if the public finally gets it that meat does not equal protein. That's the myth that we're trying to dismantle here. It's men who hold that most dearly. It's that (misguided belief), 'If I don't eat animal flesh, I can't have big biceps.'"

The Game Changers screens Friday, Saturday and May 5 at Hot Docs. See hotdocs.ca for details.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/04/23/james-cameron-touts-veganism-over-viagra-to-raise-male-awareness-and-save-the-planet.html>

The return of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Hot Docs and six other things to see, do, hear and read this week

BY WILL SLOAN, MARTIN MORROW, GERALD HANNON AND LUC RINALDI | APRIL 23, 2018



Photograph courtesy of Bell Media

An uncharted Atwood sequel

1 *The Handmaid's Tale* has so far won eight Emmys, a couple of Golden Globes and the alarmed admiration of a Trump-fearing, #MeToo-tweeting generation. The showrunners wisely sought Atwood's input to write Season 2, which begins where the novel ended: with Offred stepping into a black van, on her way to freedom—or the authorities. Either way, we expect more brilliant performances from Elisabeth Moss and co., and a new batch of Toronto cameos: the handmaids were spotted marching two by two around Artscape Wychwood Barns in January. Sunday, April 29. Bravo.



Photograph courtesy of Hot Docs

The hottest Hot Docs

2 Some highlights of Hot Docs' 25th-anniversary edition: *Anote's Ark* (pictured), the story of the Pacific Island of Kiribati, which will be swallowed by rising oceans in the next 50 years; *Oslo Diaries*, a look at a covert 1992 summit in Norway that attempted to broker peace between Israel and Palestine; and *Love, Gilda*, a documentary about the late Toronto comedian Gilda Radner, who rose from the Second City to international fame. Thursday, April 26 to Sunday, May 6. From \$17. Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.



Photograph by Danny Clinch

A wild and crazy night

3Steve Martin has jumped from starring roles to stand-up comedy specials to writing plays about Picasso to, more recently, curating a Lawren Harris show at the AGO. The polymathic funnyman will share stories from his 40-year career—including *SNL*, *The Jerk* and a side gig as a banjo player—in an onstage discussion with super-Canadian satirist Rick Mercer, followed by a signing where you can finally ask Martin to autograph your old LP of *Let's Get Small*. Monday, April 23. \$69.50–\$214.50. Roy Thomson Hall.



Photograph courtesy of Mirvish

A family-fave musical starring Mrs. Patmore

4On *Downton Abbey*, Lesley Nicol was the motherly cook Mrs. Patmore. In *Annie*, the veteran British actor takes on a role far less maternal: the gin-swilling, little girl-hating orphanage boss Miss Hannigan. A new production of the evergreen family musical arrives in Toronto fresh from London's West End, ready to charm us again with its plucky orphans, sunny score and heaps of Depression-era optimism. Tuesday, April 24 to Sunday, May 27. \$29–\$225. Ed Mirvish Theatre.



The apostate's tale

5 Rachel McAdams—pride of London, Ontario—stars alongside Rachel Weisz in *Disobedience*, a brilliant adaptation of Naomi Alderman's acclaimed novel that premiered to rapturous reviews at TIFF in 2017. Weisz plays a secular New York photographer who flies to London after her rabbi father's death. Back home, she reunites with the all-grown-up girl she once loved (McAdams), only to find her once-rebellious companion is now a conservative schoolteacher, herself married to a rabbi. McAdams delivers a moving performance as a woman caught between passion and piety. Friday, April 27.



Photograph courtesy of Donovan Woods

A new neck of the Woods

6 Donovan Woods is an all-Canadian troubadour, the type of bearded, flannel-wrapped guitar-slinger who recites raspy folk tunes about Grey Cup rings and the death of manufacturing in small Ontario towns. At Massey Hall, he'll debut his fifth full-length album, *Both Ways*, which injects his rugged northern numbers with poppy Nashville flair. Its first single, "[Burn That Bridge](#)," is one of Woods's richest tunes yet, tapping distorted guitars and lush synths for a Springsteenian anthem about falling in love with a friend. Wednesday, April 25.

\$39.50. [Danforth Music Hall](#).



Photograph by Corey Weaver

Greek mythology by way of burlesque

7Gluck's treatment of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice avoided the absurd plots and overly ornamented vocal lines typical of the baroque period. This new take, co-produced by Against the Grain Theatre, takes another radically reforming step, abandoning *Orphée's* reverential mise-en-scène for digital projections, electro-acoustic soundscapes, a virtual chorus and a burlesque troupe, including aerialist and soprano Marcy Richardson in the role of Amour. Though the story is well known—Orphée (Siman Chung) tries to bring his wife, Eurydice (Mireille Asselin), back from the dead—it's the most adventurous musical event of the month. Thursday, April 26 to Saturday, April 28. \$42–\$110. *Fleck Dance Theatre*.



Photograph by Scott Nichols

A sci-fi thriller à la *Black Mirror*

8In the near future, a Google-esque tech behemoth unveils Port, a device powered by sheer nostalgia and longing that lets users relive their past and see years ahead. The gadget is a hit—until people start getting lost in their journeys through time and space. As the population begins to plummet and electrical grids shut down, a young artist and a disillusioned Port employee team up to find their lost loved ones. Author Liz Harmer takes cues from Margaret Atwood and Cormac McCarthy in *The Amateurs*, her sharp debut, a cautionary tale of tech gone astray. Tuesday, April 24. *Knopf Canada*.

A Guide to Hot Docs 2018

By Waheeda Harris

At 25, **Toronto's Hot Docs International Film Festival** isn't slowing down: with over 260 films representing 56 countries and contributions from Morocco, Estonia, Kosovo, Syria, and Bosnia, this year's documentaries offer a diverse sampling of subjects, from pop culture to politics.

From April 26 to May 6, Hot Docs will tempt with debuts such as the international premiere of *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, director Morgan Neville's intimate portrait of beloved TV star Mister Rogers, the Canadian premiere of *Alt Right: Age of Rage* by Adam Bhala Lough, focusing on white supremacist Richard Spencer, anti-fascist activist Daryle Lamont Jenkins and Charlottesville, the North American premiere of Evangelia Kranioti's insider look at Rio de Janeiro's queer culture in *Obscuro Barroco* and the international premiere of *Love, Gilda*, a loving view of comedienne Gilda Radner by director Lisa D'Apolito, including memories from Amy Poehler, Melissa McCarthy, and Maya Rudolph.

This year's festival will have a focus on women and women's voices with the Silence Breakers series.

This year's festival will have a focus on women and women's voices with the Silence Breakers series. Chosen by three senior female programmers, these documentaries focus on stories that could only be made and told by women, like director Sarah Menzies' *Afghan Cycles*, the story of an all-female cycling group, *Primas* from director Laura Bari on the survival of two cousins, both victims of sexual assault, *Time for Ilhan*, about a Somali-American Muslim woman trying to get elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives from director Norah Shapiro, and *Yours in Sisterhood*, a participatory documentary that shows young women from across America reading letters to the editors sent to Ms. Magazine in the 1970s, directed by Irene Lustzig.

Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs explained how the closing gap between when events happen and when documentaries are made is getting shorter, thanks to availability of more funding as well as places to show documentaries. Timely stories include premiere of Jack Bryan's *Active Measures*, an expose of the world of Russian espionage and its connection to the 2016 American election, the premiere of Liz Garbus' *The Fourth Estate*, revealing the triumphs and challenges of *New York Times* reporters covering U.S. President Donald Trump, and *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*, the premiere of the second documentary about Harvey Weinstein by **Barry Avrich**, detailing the reality for Weinstein and the past year's revelations.

Playing a key role in the creation and distribution of films is part of Hot Docs legacy said Smith, but that's not its only impact. "This festival has created an audience, like with our Docs in Schools program, exposing high school students to documentaries and encouraging them to seek out more films." The program provides films to Ontario high schools free of charge and offers complimentary admission to students and seniors for daytime festival screenings.

Smith started attending the festival in 1997 as a fan and has seen how the connection between viewer and filmmaker became a hallmark of Hot Docs. Being on-stage with Tony Robbins after the screening of *I Am Not Your Guru*, revealed the power of Robbins presence as much as the

NUVO – April 23, 2018 (2 of 2)

devotion of his followers. “I got a taste of what it must be like to be Tony Robbins. It was weird, fascinating, and amazing to see the response to him.”

As always, Hot Docs satiates a myriad of tastes with films such as the international premiere of *McQueen*, the rags to riches story of the fashion designer by Ian Bonhote and Peter Ettedgui, the world premiere of *Andy Irons: Kissed by God*, Steve and Todd Jones’ film on the maverick surfer, and *Mercury 13*, focusing on the little-known history of female pilots who tested for NASA’s space program in 1961 by David Sington and Heather Walsh.

Pop culture faves this year include an examination of pop culture through the eyes of activist/pop star M.I.A in *Matangi / Maya / M.I.A.*, directed by Steve Loveridge, *The Bill Murray: Stories Life Lessons from a Mythical Man* directed by Tommy Avallone documenting the funny man’s spontaneous interactions with strangers, and *I Used To Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story*, director Jessica Leski’s spotlight on the devotion by female fans for their favourite band.

Calgary filmmaker brings Midfield Mobile Home Park to the big screen

By **MARY GETANEH**StarMetro Calgary
Mon., April 23, 2018



Calgary—Laura O’Grady still gets choked up when she talks about Rudy Prediger, a resident of what was once Midfield Mobile Home Park, having his home torn down.

She’d known Prediger for six years. Watching his home of 47 years being destroyed was devastating.

Hot Docs has received filmmaker permission to upload this trailer to the HotDocsFest YouTube channel.

“He couldn’t watch it. The tone of the community changed so much in that last six months when it went really from a small town where everyone took care of each other to almost feeling like a battle ground.”

O’Grady has captured the Midfield experience in her latest documentary *Eviction Notice*, premiering Friday at the Toronto Hot Docs festival.

The film introduces audiences to longtime residents — like 83-year-old Prediger — the neighbourhood, circumstances around the closure and chronicles the effects it had on residents.

Midfield, a Calgary inner-city neighbourhood deemed unsustainable by city council, was closed in February. All the residents who lived there were evicted but were offered financial support by the city.

The film is the culmination of six years of visits to the neighbourhood, O’Grady said. During that time, she interacted with the community and tried to help them save their homes. It wasn’t just a home or money that people lost — they lost their community, she said.

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"It was very much was a small town, predominantly seniors, that was in the middle of the city. In my suburban neighbourhood, very few of us know each other. There, everyone knew each other and they all knew about each other."

It was the kind of neighbourhood where people watched out for each other. When one of the residents diagnosed with cancer got back from treatment, a weeks worth of groceries were waiting for her on her doorstep. The younger residents would mow the lawns for the seniors. Elderly women would cut each other's hair to save money.

For O'Grady, one of the hardest and most frustrating parts of her project was dealing with city council. O'Grady fought for two years to get council to release reports on Midfield. When she finally got the reports, they were heavily redacted.

"I think the city believes, and the court upheld, that they were in their legal rights," said O'Grady. "I'm not saying they weren't, but my point of view (is) was it the right thing to do?"

She specifically remembers visiting one of the elderly women who lived in Midfield.

"She's 92 and I saw a letter of all the places she was able to go to and at the very end of the list was the Drop-In Centre and the Mustard Seed and this was on city letterhead."

O'Grady still keeps in touch with the residents from the film. She said they still miss their homes.

Mary Getaneh is a Calgary-based reporter covering arts, culture and diversity. Follow her on Twitter: @marygetaneh

Read more about:

[Hot Docs, Calgary](#)

<https://www.thestar.com/calgary/2018/04/21/calgary-filmmaker-brings-midfield-mobile-home-park-to-the-big-screen.html>

‘I’d be in prison in China’: Surrey filmmaker shines light on a ‘message in a bottle’ story in native country

Leon Lee's latest work, 'Letter from Masanjia,' featured at Vancouver's DOXA fest in May

Apr. 23, 2018 12:00 a.m. [ENTERTAINMENT](#)

Leon Lee is pretty blunt about his current situation: “I’d be in prison in China if I weren’t here in Canada making films,” he said in a phone interview this week.

Lee, a South Surrey resident who moved here from China in 2006, is a hot property in the world of documentary films, having won a Peabody Award in 2014 for his debut doc *Human Harvest*, which exposed China’s murderous and illegal organ trade.

This week Lee is off to Toronto for that city’s influential [Hot Docs](#) festival to debut his latest movie, *Letter from Masanjia*, a rare look inside China’s police state through the lens of a prisoner of conscience as he revisits his torturous past.

The 77-minute film will make its Western Canadian premiere at [Vancouver’s DOXA fest on May 5](#), with the director in attendance for a post-screening Q&A session. The event starts at 2 p.m. at Vancity Theatre [\(1181 Seymour St.\)](#).

The intriguing *Letter from Masanjia* starts off with the story of a woman in Oregon who in 2012 discovered an “S.O.S.” note stashed in a box of Halloween decorations from Kmart. When she went public with the discovery, the story went viral and eventually revealed the letter-writer as Sun Yi, a former Chinese prisoner who had been jailed for his spiritual beliefs.

“Although no longer imprisoned, Sun Yi still suffered from the constant fear of retaliation from the Chinese government,” says [a description of the film on the DOXA website](#). “In spite of this, he bravely set forth on a journey to share his story” with the help of Lee, who is no longer allowed to visit his native country and, as such, had to assist Sun Yi from afar to make the film.

“Like many people,” Lee recalled, “I had read the story about the woman who found this note, because it had quite a bit of international media coverage. I contacted her, and the more difficult part was to find the author of the letter in China, and that took quite some time, but through a network of underground journalists and dissidents, I managed to track him down.”

Sun Yi, an engineer by trade, was thinking of making a film, and had heard of Lee’s work.

“He was very happy to work with me, and so then the even more difficult thing was to pull this off in China, because it had to be filmed secretly there, making sure that he was not captured,” Lee explained. “Because of my previous films, I’m not allowed to return to China, so I wasn’t

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able to be there with him. So the first problem was that he was not allowed to make a film like this there, and number two, he's not a filmmaker, so we mostly communicated through Skype,

and tried to figure out what to do, teaching him how to use a camera, so there is authenticity and immediacy with that, that came from all this hand-held footage."

As a filmmaker, Lee's goal is "to shine a light on highly-personal true stories that resonate universally across language and culture, giving a voice to the voiceless."

Next up for the filmmaker is a narrative version of *Letter from Masanjia*, and he's also working on a stop-motion animated movie about orphans in China. "Hopefully that one will be out later this year," Lee said of the latter project.

The 17th annual edition of DOXA Documentary Film Festival will take place from May 3 to 13, at six venues in Vancouver. More details are posted at doxafestival.ca.

<https://www.bcclocalnews.com/entertainment/id-be-in-prison-in-china-surrey-filmmaker-shines-light-on-a-message-in-a-bottle-story-in-native-country/>

How a Mumbai family's pet rooster helped the Tungrus director break into filmmaking

APARITA BHANDARI

SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

PUBLISHED APRIL 23, 2018UPDATED APRIL 24, 2018



Tungrus will screen at this year's Hot Docs Festival.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

When Rishi Chandna first heard about a family living in a cramped Mumbai apartment with a rooster and two cats as pets, the absurdity of the situation immediately struck him.

First of all, there was the matter of space – or lack thereof, considering that the flat is home to Nusrat Bharde, his wife, Celestine, their two sons, Aasim and Sameer, besides the three animals; all of this in a city as densely populated as Mumbai. Then there was the crowing glory.

“I grew up in a similar middle-class family. I am from Calcutta,” Chandna, 36, says. “I remember my mother would take me to the butcher shop and I saw chicken being [slaughtered]. I never saw a chicken as a pet; it was always an animal that’s meant to be eaten. I started wondering: How is the family – which is so much like my own family – how are they dealing with it? This hierarchy of pets.”

Those initial ruminations eventually became *Tungrus*, a short documentary that will screen at this year’s Hot Docs Festival, which runs in Toronto from April 26 to May 6.

As soon as Chandna heard about the Bhardes and their rooster from his co-producer Ritika Ranjan, who is a friend and colleague of the younger son, Sameer, he reached out to the family.

“Sameer had just mentioned it casually [to Ritika] over lunch one day, about the rooster. There was a bit of reluctance and a bit of embarrassment, about the kind of situation he was having to deal with at home,” Chandna says, speaking on the phone from Nyon, Switzerland, where *Tungrus* had a world premiere at the Visions du Réel film festival.

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To his surprise, when he called up the Bharde family about the prospect of making a documentary, they agreed fairly quickly. “They were looking for some kind of catharsis, they wanted to talk about this. They were actually stressed out about the situation.”

The rooster is clearly the star of Tungrus, strutting about the apartment in his reign of terror over the two cats, Ginger and Garlic, raucously crowing at all hours, swooping into everybody’s business. The Bhardes, meanwhile, try to explain their connection to the bird: The patriarch Nusrat, who bought him as a chick on a whim, is clear-eyed about the rooster’s destiny on their dinner table, while his sons are not as sanguine about that eventuality; Celestine, meanwhile, has a soft spot for the rooster despite the nuisance.

That potential to explore comedy and conflict, as well as the room for contemplation, also intrigued Chandna, who had been looking to break into filmmaking after a few years of making corporate videos for clients.

“There’s this perception that documentaries have to be topical, they have to relate to current affairs. I like to work with humour – it’s a powerful emotion to make people laugh through satire or black comedy or tragicomedy,” Chandna says, citing celebrated filmmaker Werner Herzog as one of his inspirations. He came across the works of Herzog and other cinema stalwarts as part of a postgraduate degree from MICA, a business school based in Gujarat, when professors would show movies to explain concepts of culture, communication and semiotics. Although he applied several times to one of India’s film schools, he didn’t make the final cut. Instead, after a short stint in advertising, Chandna assisted a few Bollywood filmmakers, shooting behind-the-scenes videos, among other tasks.

In trying to find his own voice, however, he started to gravitate toward documentaries and kept coming back to Herzog’s films, especially his earlier works, “like *Land of Silence and Darkness*,” Chandna says. “Here was a filmmaker who is interested in people on the fringes of society. He was hunting for anomalies, to him, they were extraordinary. He would extract meaning from those subjects ... Even if you look at some of his fiction narratives, they are actually in the language of docu-dramas. That language permeated me.”

In India, documentaries are still seen as a state-funded medium, says Suraj Prasad Mahato, co-founder of the New Delhi, India-based Lightcube Film Society. Besides organizing film screenings, workshops and running an outreach project that screens educational and entertainment films in villages in India, Lightcube also publishes *Umbra*, a print quarterly on film culture in India.

“Only a few filmmakers who invest their own money into subjects they feel inclined towards, they are making independent docs,” he says in a phone call from India. At the same time, “interest in documentaries in India is very gradually rising. So there have been a couple of documentary-specific festivals that have started in the country, maybe in the past five-six years.”

Discovering Indian documentaries organically is very difficult, he adds. Audiences usually see them at film festivals. Otherwise, “unless the filmmaker uploads it for free on mediums such as YouTube or Vimeo and they push it themselves through social media or friends network, it’s a challenge.”

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Chandna and his small crew shot *Tungrus* in five days over a period of three weeks. As they captured hours of footage observing the habits of the Bharde household, then hung around outside the house for chat sessions over chai and cigarettes, other themes started coming into focus.

The Hindu nationalist government BJP had implemented a beef ban in 2015, a law that banned the slaughter of cattle such as cows, bulls, bullocks and calves. Sale and possession of beef became a punishable offence, earning a fine or up to five years in jail. In September, 2015, Mohammad Akhlaq died at the hands of a mob that suspected him of eating beef.

“The [BJP] came out and started telling people what they can eat or not eat. This was all in the back of my mind, and it motivated me. I wanted people to understand how you can form your own relationship to what you want to eat or not,” Chandna says. “Food is identity. This was an opportunity to bring out subtext [of acceptance and tolerance] ... It was almost like an epiphany.”

As the shoot wrapped, Chandna found himself ruminating on his own life.

“It’s not like I am going stop eating meat, or chicken. [*Tungrus*] made me realize that we, as human beings, we are also like this animal, living in cages. We are also looking for our freedoms,” he says.

As for the fate of his own documentary? After trying to give it as much of an international festival run as he can, he will start planning an Indian premiere, he says.

“It’s when we will come home to roost.”

Tungrus screens at the Hot Docs Festival April 27 and April 29.

Special to The Globe and Mail

The Film Sales Company boards 'Behind The Curve' for Hot Docs (exclusive)

BY JEREMY KAY 23 APRIL 2018

Andrew Herwitz's The Film Sales Company has boarded worldwide sales rights to Daniel J. Clark's *Behind The Curve* ahead of its world premiere at Hot Docs next week.

The film takes an unprecedented look at Flat Earthers, who believe there is a centuries-long conspiracy to suppress the truth that the Earth is flat.

"Daniel Clark has revealed that unlike some conspiracy theorists who may seem like oddballs who spend their time in dark rooms with tin foil hats, the community of Flat Earthers are a heterogeneous, articulate, passionate and good humoured community of people who are a delight to meet and raise interesting broader questions of how in today's world we each tend to listen to those who agree with us and discount opposing views," Herwitz said.

In addition to *Behind The Curve*, New York-based The Film Sales Company will present the international premieres of both *Time For Ilhaan*, about the first Somali Muslim woman to run for elected office in the US, and *Yellow Is Forbidden*, about Chinese fashion designer Guo Pei, both of which screened over the weekend at Tribeca.

Hot Docs runs in Toronto from April 26-May 6.

Hot Docs review: Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.

Steve Loveridge's fascinating doc looks at the evolution of the Grammy-nominated recording artist and outrage-generator

BY **RADHEYAN SIMONPILLAI**

APRIL 23, 2018

12:38 AM



MATANGI/MAYA/M.I.A. (Steve Loveridge, U.S.). 97 minutes. Rating: NNNN

M.I.A. doesn't show up until nearly the halfway mark in **Steve Loveridge's** breakneck and fascinating doc.

Instead the film spends a great deal of time with home footage shot by Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam, before she becomes a Grammy-nominated recording artist and outrage-generator.

Like a miniature coming-of-age story, early sequences see Maya in both London and Sri Lanka, sorting out an identity between Sri Lankan refugee and British citizen, child of an absent freedom fighter or terrorist (depending on your politics), documentarian or musician.

It's all context that informs what comes later with M.I.A.'s combustible mix of music and activism, where the search for identity continues between popstar and provocateur.

May 2, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema (Big Ideas screening); May 3, 4 pm, Coliseum Scarborough; May 5, 9 pm, and May 6, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/matangi-maya-m-i-a-hot-docs/>

Hot Docs review: Bathtubs Over Broadway

Film about obscure "industrial musicals" – Broadway-style shows commissioned by corporations – gives these gems their time in the spotlight

BY **GLENN SUMI**

APRIL 23, 2018

12:37 AM



BATHTUBS OVER BROADWAY (Dava Whisenant, U.S.). 87 minutes. Rating: NNNNN

If you've never whistled songs about light bulbs or bathroom fixtures, that could change after watching this ridiculously entertaining documentary about "industrial musicals," a sub-genre that flourished from the 1950s to 80s, when big corporations would commission Broadway-style musicals to be performed for their employees at national conventions.

The Late Show With David Letterman writer **Steve Young** discovered these shows from their not-for-public-sale souvenir albums and soon became obsessed, tracking down their more famous stars and creators (who include **Chita Rivera**, **Martin Short** and choreographer **Susan Stroman**) and also their lesser-known talents to find out more about the scene.

Besides providing catchy audio and video samples from the shows and mind-boggling stats (the budget of one was six times that of the same year's *My Fair Lady*), the doc presents a fascinating picture of optimism and corporate loyalty in mid-20th-century America.

It's also heartwarming to see the jaded, ironic Young follow his obsession as his own long-running TV show comes to an end and he goes on to his next venture.

May 1, 9:30 pm, Hart House; May 3, 9 pm, TIFF 1; May 5, 3:45 pm, Isabel Bader

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/bathtubs-over-broadway-hot-docs/>

Hot Docs review: Netizens

Cynthia Lowen's quietly furious doc looks at women who have been victimized online

BY RADHEYAN SIMONPILLAI

APRIL 23, 2018

12:23 AM



NETIZENS (Cynthia Lowen, U.S.). 97 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Cynthia Lowen's insightful and quietly furious doc spends time with multiple women who have all been victimized online, whether by violent threats, revenge porn or an all-consuming hack into their private lives.

Netizens tracks the extent of the damage that the current legal system easily brushes aside and the women's efforts to fight back. Their resilience is the story but the filmmaking often says more, such as when the camera lingers on tertiary details that complement or complicate arguments, or when Lowen withholds a surprising detail not for its narrative impact but to properly contextualize its relevance (or lack thereof).

Apr 29, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema (Big Ideas screening); Apr 30, 10 am, Isabel Bader; May 5, 10 am, Hot Docs Cinema

Exclaim! – April 23, 2018

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

Directed by Morgan Neville

Starring Fred Rogers, Joanne Rogers, François Clemmons

By **Matt Bobkin**

Published Apr 23, 2018

The world could really use a Mister Rogers right about now. In an age characterized by vitriol and hate, someone who exudes peace, warmth and self-acceptance on an international level can seem a unifying force in these uncertain times.

Won't You Be My Neighbor? chronicles Fred Rogers' rise from warm-hearted seminary school student to beloved children's edutainer. But, more than that, it's a snapshot of American life through the eyes of its purest orator.

Many remember Rogers as a cardigan-clad man with a soft voice, the mild-mannered host of long-running children's program *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. All of that is true, but *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* casts Rogers as an iconoclast, as a powerful advocate in securing public broadcasting funding and as a shaper in conversations surrounding political assassinations and ending racial segregation. His willingness to provide an alternative to loud, often violent children's TV programs inspired generations of learners and dreamers, and his impact is fully explored in this documentary.

Directed by Morgan Neville (best known for Academy Award-winning documentary *20 Feet from Stardom*), *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* blends archival footage spanning Rogers' entire career with new interviews from those Rogers impacted over his 74 years, including family, friends, coworkers and even the parents of a quadriplegic man featured on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* as a child. The film offers endless, glowing praise for a man guided by a need to love and be loved.

Not much is needed to orient Rogers' story in today's political context — King Friday XIII, one of the many puppet denizens of Rogers' "Neighborhood of Make-Believe" segment, builds a wall in a Vietnam War-era episode — a testament to Rogers' universal, transcendent messages of peace, love and self-acceptance.

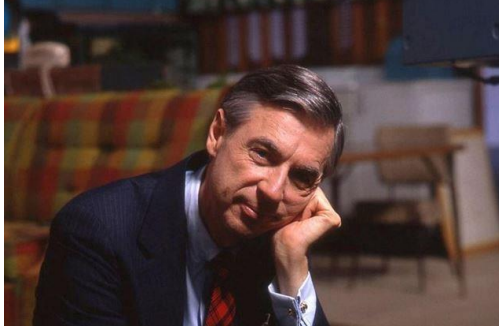
This film is a beacon of hope and a reminder of what's missing in today's tense and divided socio-political climate. There will never be another Mister Rogers, but *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* is a powerful reminder that his lessons and demeanour are everlasting, sure to inspire a new generation of dreamers. (Focus Features)

https://exclaim.ca/film/article/wont_you_be_my_neighbor_-directed_by_morgan_neville

22 movies to watch at Hot Docs

The annual documentary festival turns 25 this year, with more than 200 titles — its biggest lineup yet.

WhatsOn Apr 23, 2018 by Bruce DeMara, Peter Howell and Raju Mudhar Toronto Star



Fred Rogers of the children's show Mr. Roger's Neighborhood in the documentary Won't You Be My Neighbor? - Hot Docs Festival/Photo

WHERE: Venues throughout Toronto

DATE: April 26 to May 6

TICKETS: Available [online](#) and from the [Hot Docs Box Office](#)

A quarter-century after Toronto's Hot Docs Festival began as a small, mostly inside-industry event, it has become the largest in North America and one of the preeminent fests of its kind in the world for films that explore true stories, memorable personalities, and social, cultural and political events and ideas from all parts of the globe.

At the 25-year mark, Hot Docs has also achieved a laudable and remarkable milestone in gender equality, with half of the more than 200 films on offer made by women filmmakers.

The festival, which runs from April 26 to May 6 this year, has also become a much needed forum for international filmmakers and a much anticipated staple for cinema-loving audiences in Toronto and elsewhere. It's set to sell more than 200,000 tickets at 14 venues across the city, including locations such as the Aga Khan Museum.

The Star's writers reviewed some of the most interesting movies. All ratings are out of four stars. For tickets and more info, visit hotdocs.ca.

ACTIVE MEASURES

4 stars

For anyone trying to navigate the labyrinth of personalities and events behind the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in the last U.S. presidential election, this film is a comprehensive and indispensable primer. It's also riveting and authoritative, quoting impeccable sources in the intelligence and diplomatic community, as well as well-known faces like Hillary Clinton and Senator John McCain, showing the Russians' long history of subverting rival nations and how it pulled off its biggest coup to date, installing Donald Trump as president. (Directed by Jack Bryan.) *Bruce DeMara*

ANOTE'S ARK

3.5 stars



Anote Tong, president of Kiribati, in his office in the documentary Anote's Ark. - Hot Docs Festival/Photo

You've probably never heard of Kiribati, but it's one of a number of Pacific island nations facing imminent submersion and destruction as a result of global warming. Unusual climate events are already causing more than occasional flooding. Fortunately the islanders have an eloquent and impassioned champion in President Anote Tong, who travels the world beseeching and seeking help from other nations. Yet the film's waning moments suggest that hope for this paradise may be lost. (Directed by Matthieu Rytz.) *BD*

THE ARTIST AND THE PERVERT

3 stars

Georg Friedrich Haas is the world's most performed living composer, an Austrian whose parents were Nazi sympathizers. Mollena Williams is a well-known kink educator who grew up in Harlem and Haas's artistic "muse." She wears a collar that defines their master/slave relationship — and what an unexpectedly tender one it is, marked by collaboration and deep emotional bonds that go beyond bondage. The film, directed by Beatrice Behn and René Gebhardt, is surprisingly sweet and instructive (and occasionally naughty). *BD*

THE CLEANERS

3.5 stars

In a world where more than 3 billion people are connecting through social media websites, this riveting documentary takes a peak behind the Facebook curtain to reveal the content moderators, “cleaners” who have the Sisyphean task of keeping nudity, child exploitation, hate and other dreck off the internet. For the beleaguered workers in Manila, it’s a job that comes with impossible demands in workload and expectations that leave deep psychological scars. Equal parts fascinating and frightening. (Directed by Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck.) *BD*

COMMANDER ARIAN

3.5 stars



Arian, the leader of a female fighting unit battling Islamic terrorists in war-torn Syria, cleaning her gun in the documentary Commander Arian. - Hot Docs Festival/Photo

History has not been kind to the Kurds, a people without a country in a troubled region of the world. But they’re a tenacious lot as personified by Arian, the leader of a female fighting unit battling Islamic terrorists in war-torn Syria. The film follows Arian before and after she suffers five gunshot wounds. It takes us to the front lines of battle and shows us the camaraderie of courageous women like Arian, who wages a parallel fight to instill a sense of worth in her fellow soldiers. Inspirational in all the right ways. (Directed by Alba Sotorra.) *BD*

DIXIE CHICKS: SHUT UP AND SING

3.5 stars

When Dixie Chicks singer Natalie Maines told a London concert audience in 2003 she was “ashamed” of then U.S.-president George W. Bush, she and her country music trio became the object of right-wing hatred across America. But there’s no better way than adversity to test a person’s mettle, and one of the many remarkable things about this documentary is watching the band evolve both personally and musically. Co-directors Barbara Kopple and Cecilia Peck originally released this doc in 2006, but not much has changed if you consider the people and prejudices behind the rise of current U.S. President Donald Trump. *Peter Howell*

THE GAME CHANGERS

3 stars

If a vegan diet is good enough for Olympians, ultra-marathoners, ancient Roman gladiators and Arnold Schwarzenegger, then shouldn’t the rest of us be eating it, too? So goes the argument of James Wilks, a former MMA fighter turned elite military trainer who practises and preaches the no-meat credo with the enthusiasm of an infomercial pitchman. But he’s persuasive, marshalling scientific data and athletic testimonials that strongly suggests carrots are better than carne if you want to up your energy and cut your risk of heart disease and cancer. If that’s not enough to persuade men to get their hands off their burgers, a urologist pops up to clinically prove that vegetarians achieve better erections than meat lovers. (Directed by Louis Psihoyos.) *PH*

THE HEAT: A KITCHEN (R)EVOLUTION

3.5 stars

The world’s top chefs, invariably men, have long had a reputation for being “equal opportunity a-holes.” Thankfully, Toronto filmmaker Maya Gallus shows us a slew of top women chefs locally, and in the U.S. and Europe who break the mould in so many ways, among them the U.K.’s Angela Hartnett, a protégé of Hell’s Kitchen hothead Gordon Ramsay. The film gives us women who are intelligent, articulate, hard-working while offering interesting insights into how they run their kitchens in a distinctly female way. *BD*

LAILA AT THE BRIDGE

3 stars



*Laila looking for addicts to help under the infamous bridge in downtown Kabul in the documentary *Laila at the Bridge*. - Hot Docs Festival/Photo*

With 90 per cent of the world's opium production, it's small wonder Afghanistan has a serious drug addiction crisis. Among the few trying to help is Laila, a courageous woman who works with her former addict brother against all odds, including an indifferent patriarchal government (this is, after all, Afghanistan). But watch the tight smiles of squirming government officials when the cameras are on. The ugliness and squalor of the addicts — especially those under the bridge of the title — bring the harsh reality home. (Directed by Elissa Sylvia Mirzaei and Gulistan Mirzaei.) *BD*

LOVE, SCOTT

3 stars

The film is a sensitive and engaging exploration of the aftermath of the homophobic attack on Scott Jones, a talented young musician in small-town New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, that left him a paraplegic. The community rallies and confronts its own homophobia as the likeable and thoughtful Jones struggles to come to terms with his future — and his fear of ever being alone — as he seeks to find forgiveness for his attacker. A particularly bitter pill to swallow: that the attack was not prosecuted as a hate crime. (Directed by Laura Marie Wayne.) *BD*

MANUFACTURED LANDSCAPES

4 stars

What begins as a portrait of Canadian landscape photographer Edward Burtynsky turns into an astonishing visual indictment of man's inhumanity to Mother Earth, as seen through the documentary prism of Jennifer Baichwal. There's strange and symmetrical beauty in the scenes of environmental abuse caused by factories in China and Bangladesh. The opening tracking shot by cinematographer Peter Mettler through a never-ending factory qualifies as one of the modern era's most startling movie moments. Twelve years after its initial release, it remains a classic film by a Canadian documentary master. *PH*

NETIZENS

3 stars

Through the compelling stories of three American women, the film makes a solid case that the Digital Age has merely provided misogynist men another sick and effective way to victimize women. Director Cynthia Lowen demonstrates just how onerous and painful it is for women to fight back against their victimizers but offers some hope in the courage and determination of activists and individuals. It's a timely film that ought to summon everyone's outrage. *BD*

OUR NEW PRESIDENT

3.5 stars



An image from Russian TV of President Vladimir Putin with U.S. President Donald Trump, part of the documentary Our New President. - Hot Docs Festival/Photo

Fake news with a shot of vodka. Maxim Pozdorovkin's sobering doc shows how avidly — and effectively — Russia's state-run new agencies used hacking and trolling tactics to promote Donald Trump while demonizing his rival Hillary Clinton in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The doc alternately amuses, shocks and enrages, revealing concerted Russian propaganda efforts, backed by Vladimir Putin's state-controlled media, that range from the comically paranoid to the scarily sophisticated. This film has become even more urgent in the months since its Sundance premiere, as it becomes ever more apparent that Russian collusion helped propel Trump to his unlikely electoral victory. It's all fun and games until somebody loses a democracy. *PH*

PLAYING HARD

2.5 stars

This film charts the development of the Ubisoft videogame *For Honor* from its inception to launch. Following a few members of the leadership team, it heavily focuses on creative director Jason VandenBerghe, who wanted to make this sword-based fighting game for over a decade, and there is good stuff about a driven artist realizing his dream. It is even better on the too few occasions it shows the nitty gritty and personal cost of game development. (Directed by Jean-Simon Chartier.) *Raju Mudhar*

QUEERCORE: HOW TO PUNK A REVOLUTION

3 stars

Way back before social media, a group of queer activists cannily created their own “scene” by pretending it already existed. This documentary goes beyond cultural anthropology, exploring how queer activism briefly allied itself to the punk movement before becoming its own movement with the gay liberation movement, rejecting (like punk) all the conventions that growing social acceptance entailed. Filmmakers Bruce LaBruce and John Waters and others provide lively and subversive commentary. (Directed by Yony Leyser.) *BD*

ROLL RED ROLL

4 stars



Crime blogger Alex Goddard in the documentary Roll Red Roll. - Hot Docs Festival/Photo

When star members of a high school football team gang-rape an unconscious teen girl, coaches and school officials in Steubenville, Ohio, fall all over themselves to downplay the horrific event — until a whistle-blowing blogger unearths and posts online clues to the crime and tells the world about the churchgoing town’s hypocrisy. Nancy Schwartzman’s devastating real-life thriller documents a shocking sexual assault in a tight-knit community, and the role of social media in compounding the felony but also helping to solve it. *PH*

RUNNING FROM CRAZY

3 stars

Mariel Hemingway grew up in the gigantic shadow of a legendary grandfather, novelist Ernest Hemingway. But it comes with loads of baggage, including a family history of mental illness, addiction and suicide. Archival footage supplements the story of Hemingway and her two older sisters, and the toll the Hemingway legacy has exacted upon them. One shocking revelation further darkens the picture. While the film feels a little self-indulgent at times, Hemingway proves to be a worthy protagonist. (Directed by Barbara Kopple.) *BD*

THE SILK AND THE FLAME

3 stars

Part of the largest annual migration on Earth, Yao returns home every year for the Lunar New Year celebration to visit his family and face the inevitable questions from his dying father, relatives and neighbours: why isn't he married? Shot in black and white, it's an intimate look at family life in a traditional culture, featuring a kind and decent man approaching middle age who's given much to his family yet continues to sacrifice his own happiness to placate them. The cinematography is amazing, the tone sorrowful. (Directed by Jordan Schiele.) *BD*

THE TROLLEY

3 stars



Riding the Red Rocket in Toronto in the documentary The Trolley. - Hot Docs Festival/Photo

Stephen Low's passion for electric streetcars (also known as trams or trolleys) comes through loud, clear and IMAX-sized in this gloriously photographed love letter to the humble transit workhorse. Touring 39 cities in 16 countries, it makes a strong case for the streetcar as a saviour for car-clogged roads and smoke-choked environments, even if many automobile drivers consider them a nuisance. Toronto's enduring passion for the TTC's "Red Rockets"

rumbles throughout, but the film risks overselling the message with over-the-top narration. Ignore that and savour the visuals. *PH*

UNITED WE FAN

3 stars



Bjo and John Trimble, the couple who organized an unprecedented letter-writing campaign to save the original Star Trek from cancellation in 1967, in the documentary United We Fan. - Hot Docs Festival/Photo

“What would you say to people who say it’s just a TV show?” is the perfect question to ask the many people in *United We Fan*, which is a fun look at many fan campaigns that fought to keep their favourite TV shows on the air. Featuring superfans, actors and TV producers, this doc explores the methods that helped save shows like *Star Trek*, *Cagney & Lacey* and many more. (Directed by Michael Sparaga.) *RM*

WHAT WALAA WANTS

3 stars

What Walaa wants is to become a police officer for the Palestinian Authority. What Canadian filmmaker Christy Garland does is let this true-life story unfold in a naturalistic way, refusing to take sides in the ongoing and intractable Middle East conflict. Walaa grew up in a refugee camp and her mother spent eight years in prison for her role in a botched terrorist attack. But Walaa, who’s pugnacious and not always likeable, epitomizes female empowerment as she navigates the obstacles in her path. *BD*

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

3.5 stars

Mr. Rogers really was a lot like his iconic television persona, a “square” who believed in goodness, love and the value of positive reinforcement to young children. Filmmaker Morgan Neville delivers a sweet, affecting story about the star of Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood, which premiered on a local Pittsburgh television station in 1967. The film features archival footage of Rogers, who died in 2003, and interviews with family and the people who worked closely with him. The picture that emerges is of an unlikely hero, a man of uncommon decency and personal faith who led a gently personal crusade to give young audiences a space on TV where they felt loved and accepted. If the film proves anything, it’s that a show like his — with almost comically rudimentary sets, hand puppets and unworldly characters — would never survive in the current media age dominated by gratuitous violence and flashy special effects. Brace yourself to be aggrieved and outraged toward the end by loony right-wing commentators who accuse Rogers posthumously of giving generations of youngsters an exaggerated sense of entitlement, and religious nutcases who picketed his funeral. BD

In the Seats – April 23, 2018

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'THE ARTIST AND THE PERVERT'

Posted in Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Paolo Kagaoan - April 23, 2018

Remember title sequences? Beatrice Behn and Rene Gebhart's documentary *The Artist and the Pervert* has one of those and it's for the books. It shows the two titular subjects, Georg Friedrich Haas and Mollena Lee Williams. They're naked and are in front of clothesline that looks like sheet music.

This is frank and bold. The directors made an interesting decision to show their subjects without clothes. We don't even know what they do for a living. They are both sexual and intellectual human beings. Behn and Gebhart decided to show the former when most people consider the latter more 'palatable'.

Georg is a composer and Mollena is a kink educator, nebulous prospects in both their financial and social aspects. What makes their pairing more complex is that both practice BDSM, Mollena being the sub in their marriage. As a reminder, black women in vanilla marriages white men are still controversial.

As an LGBT person whose trying to get his foot in the door into intellectual circles, watching them is inspiring. It's equally disheartening to see the hate they get from the intellectual circles where Georg belongs. The doc dismantles the assumption that creative circles have tolerance for 'different' people.

The movie uses both animation and talking heads to explore both subjects' stories and how they arrived into BDSM. Georg's path into his sexuality is rockier as a survivor of child abuse from his parents. This is going to make bigots assume things about BDSM, which Mollena dismantles.

The title sequence and the animation are here and they're a feast. However, the only other times the directors do something exciting visually is when musicians play Georg's work. But then static shots and archive footage are enough to show Mollena say amazing things. Like about the best cunnilingus she got.

Hot Docs is showing *The Artist and the Pervert* at the Scotiabank Theatre on April 27, 2018 at 8:30 PM. They're also showing it at the Hart House Theatre on April 29th at 11:45 AM. Last screening is also at the Hart House Theatre on May 4th at 6:30 PM.

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-the-artist-and-the-pervert/>

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'I'M LEAVING NOW'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Victor Stiff - April 23, 2018

During *I'm Leaving Now's* early moments, we watch a man pick cans and bottles out of dumpsters. The camera, planted on his rickety shopping cart, shakes and rattles, practically fighting him as he drags his loot through the cold New York streets. This is Felipe Hernández' daily routine. He's undocumented and forced to scrape by on a modest income. Co-directors Lindsey Cordero and Armando Croda's *I'm Leaving Now* spends two years following Felipe's quest for love, forgiveness, and a place where he belongs.

Felipe makes for a compelling documentary subject; the camera loves him and he loves the camera. It soaks up every bit of Felipe's larger than life presence. He may be an undocumented resident but he's not one to keep a low profile. Felipe walks through his Brooklyn neighbourhood in a sombrero, singing ballads, and greeting locals. He wears his love of back home on his sleeve, though, he hasn't gone back in 16-years.

Felipe migrated to America to create a better life for his family back home and ever since he arrived stateside, he's had one foot out the door. Felipe converts most of his money into pesos to send back to his family. And he does so while living in a space so tiny his bathroom door doubles as a kitchen shelf. Waiting back home is a wife and children, including a teenage son he hasn't met. But things back in Mexico have changed. His family has mismanaged their finances and his wife's feelings towards him may have cooled. Throughout the film we watch Felipe wrestle with choosing between his current life and the one he left behind.

At 70-minutes long, *I'm Leaving Now* is short but not sweet. Without Felipe and his charismatic personality, this film would be a total slog.

I'm Leaving Now showtimes:

Saturday, April 28, 6:00 PM, Scotiabank Theatre 07

Monday, April 30, 2:45 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 04

Sunday, May 06, 5:30 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 04

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-im-leaving-now/>

In the Seats – April 23, 2018

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'CONSTRUCTING ALBERT'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Victor Stiff - April 23, 2018

Constructing Albert tells the story of a master chef named Albert Adrià. Albert rose to prominence in the shadow of his world-renowned older brother Ferran. Together, the men began a culinary revolution. They had it all; their world-famous Catalan restaurant elBulli, Michelin Stars, and the clout to staff their restaurants with the cream of the culinary crop. But Fatherhood has a way of pushing men to be better versions of themselves, so Albert stepped away from his comfortable role. *Constructing Albert* focuses on Albert's return to the culinary world and his attempt to get out from under his famous brother's shadow.

What's most interesting about this movie is that Albert strives for something beyond success. He doesn't want money and acclaim; he wants to push boundaries and challenge himself as an artist. To do so, he opens five wildly different restaurants that range from Japanese/Peruvian to Mexican. This would spread most chefs too thin, but Albert's mind never stops churning out ideas for new dishes. The best part of the film is watching Albert constantly challenge himself to meet his own high expectations.

Constructing Albert has a cinematic look and feel. Some documentaries take a fly on the wall approach and frame boring shots from standard angles. When dealing with Michelin Star calibre restaurants you want the food captured with the precision of a *Vanity Fair* cover shoot. Co-directors Laura Collado and Jim Loomis's dynamic camerawork keeps the onscreen action interesting and makes the food look glorious. Their excellent camera work and clever editing keep the story feeling snappy without any dull spots.

Unlike many documentaries, *Constructing Albert* tells a story with a beginning, middle, and an ending. It's a light and fun watch with delectable imagery that will make you salivate. Don't go watch this film hungry.

Constructing Albert showtimes:

Wednesday, May 02, 7:00 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 01

Friday, May 04, 1:30 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 03

Saturday, May 05, 11:00 AM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 02

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-constructing-albert/>

In The Seats – April 23, 2018

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'NETIZENS'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Theatrical by Kirk Haviland - April 23, 2018

Online bullying and revenge tactics have grown ever present in the world with the proliferation of social media and ease of access to the internet via smartphones. The other side of this issue though are the real victims, as people have been bullied and had their lives hampered, even affecting the ability for some to support themselves and sustain gainful employment. *Netizens* looks to shine an important light into this dark area of the internet through the stories of 3 women. Activist and founder of Feminist Frequency, an infamous Youtuber for her examination of video games from a feminist viewpoint, Anita Sarkeesian. A lawyer for those affected by online bullying and social media harassment Carrie Goldberg, and Tina, a victim of a former relationship turned bad.

The film opens with a poignant story as Goldberg walks us down an alley and relays the details of how one of her clients, a high school girl, was raped there. Despicably, it was recorded and distributed through her entire high school where she is constantly being degraded for it. Anita relays the stories of her harassment from the anonymous army of geeks on social media that rebuke her takedowns of video games and their sexist beliefs, some are so horrifically violent in the description they force her to seclude herself for protection. But the most poignant tale comes from Tina, whose ex decrees online after they broke up that she was secretly a sex worker, though evidence presented clearly shows she wasn't, costing her job, friends, and family in the process. Her ordeal is horrific in the simplicity that it takes to ruin one life.

Towards the end, the film takes a bigger scope with the inclusion of the #metoo movement, though some audiences might miss the sharper focus on smaller stories that dominate the beginning of the film.

Screens

Sun, April 29th 6:30 pm Hot Docs Cinema (Big Ideas Screening)

Mon, April 30th 10 am Isabel Bader Theater

Sat, May 5th 10 am Hot Docs Cinema

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-netizens/>

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'TAKE LIGHT'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Courtney Small - April 23, 2018

The access to electricity for power is something that we take for granted in North America. While the odd power outage might cause temporary discomfort, our expectations are that the lights will come on whenever we want them to. Many of us are more concerned with our cell phone data usage than with our electricity consumption.

Unfortunately, many of the Nigerians featured in Shasha Nakhai's *Take Light* do not have such luxuries. As we learn in Nakhai's documentary, over half of the nearly 200 million citizens do not have access to 24-hour electricity. Who is to blame for this? Well, the answer is rather complicated.

As we witness through several individuals including Martins, an electrician who risks his life daily to provide for his family, and Deborah, a customer service rep who takes the brunt of the client's volatile and violent rage, the problem is a systemic one.

The government's decision to privatize the electrical system, which runs off an old and unstable grid, has led to the misuse of a key natural resource. Furthermore, narrow-minded consumers, believing they are entitled to things for free, are using dangerous and illegal ways to syphon power to their homes.

All this makes for a compelling and complex look at a society in a vicious cycle. By focusing on the individuals who, like Martins and others who are simply trying to better their lives, Nakhai ensures that the human cost remains at the forefront. Though the film points to alternative energy sources as a possible solution, it is clear a new direction in both execution and thought is desperately needed.

Take Light is an urgent and necessary call for change as time and patience are two things those living in darkness no longer can afford.

Screens:

Friday, April 27, 6:45 PM, Hart House Theatre

Tuesday, May 1, 3:15 PM, Scotiabank Theatre

Thursday, May 3, 6:30 PM, Scotiabank Theatre

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-take-light/>

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'LOVE, SCOTT'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Paolo Kagaoan - April 23, 2018

Laura Marie Wayne's feature length documentary debut; *Love, Scott* starts out on the wrong foot and it mostly stays there. Her main subject is musician Scott Jones, who became a paraplegic after Shane Matheson attempted to murder him. She follows him around as he embarks on a journey through his home town of New Glasgow.

They even go to the place where the brutal attack happened. This is one of a few scenes taking place in almost darkness. I suppose she decided to light him this way to hide his face. Besides, his words can sufficiently express his emotions.

Speaking from experience, there is a tendency within LGBT people to dwell on their traumas. This movie is also probably the closest thing Jones gets to a acknowledgement that the attack was a hate crime. That's because there is no mention of his sexuality in the court's official records about the crime.

There's also this implication that Wayne and Jones are friends.

She, however, chooses to spend most of the film during these moments. It's as if he's more of a victim to her than a survivor. She also has monologues throughout the doc instead of only letting him speak.

I do appreciate the doc for its complex portrayal of being an out gay man's community. Stereotypes come into urban audiences' minds when small towns are on screen, especially during movies like this. We even get to hear Jones' mother recount a conversation where an older gay man is called naive for coming out.

We also do get to see a few scenes when Jones works as a conductor, activist, and motivational speaker. As if his tragedy opened those peoples' minds. But after those triumphant scenes showing nuance, Wayne refocuses on scenes that seem more manipulative than the usual doc.

Love, Scott shows TIFF Bell Lightbox on both April 28th at 6:30 PM and May 3rd at 9:15 PM. It also shows on April 29th at 10:15 AM at the Isabel Bader Theatre.

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-love-scott/>

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The Film Sales Company boards 'Behind The Curve' for Hot Docs (exclusive)

BY JEREMY KAY 23 APRIL 2018

Andrew Herwitz's The Film Sales Company has boarded worldwide sales rights to Daniel J. Clark's *Behind The Curve* ahead of its world premiere at Hot Docs next week.

The film takes an unprecedented look at Flat Earthers, who believe there is a centuries-long conspiracy to suppress the truth that the Earth is flat.

“Daniel Clark has revealed that unlike some conspiracy theorists who may seem like oddballs who spend their time in dark rooms with tin foil hats, the community of Flat Earthers are a heterogeneous, articulate, passionate and good humoured community of people who are a delight to meet and raise interesting broader questions of how in today's world we each tend to listen to those who agree with us and discount opposing views,” Herwitz said.

In addition to *Behind The Curve*, New York-based The Film Sales Company will present the international premieres of both *Time For Ilhaan*, about the first Somali Muslim woman to run for elected office in the US, and *Yellow Is Forbidden*, about Chinese fashion designer Guo Pei, both of which screened over the weekend at Tribeca.

Hot Docs runs in Toronto from April 26-May 6.

MetFilm acquires Hot Docs opener 'The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution' (exclusive)

BY WENDY MITCHELL 24 APRIL 2018



Maya Gallus' documentary looks at women running some of the world's top restaurants.

MetFilm Sales has acquired world rights excluding Canada to Maya Gallus' documentary *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*, which will have its world premiere on Wednesday as the opening film at Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

The feature-length documentary looks at women running some of the world's top restaurants, and a younger generation unwilling to submit to the brutal, macho conditions that were once the norm.

The film profiles pioneers including Anne Sophie Pic of France's Maison Pic; Angela Hartnett of Murano in London; and Anita Lo, who led the first all-female team to beat an Iron Chef in the US. The new-generation interviewees include Amanda Cohen of vegetarian restaurant *Dirt Candy* in New York; rising star Victoria Blamey from Chumley's in New York; Toronto's Suzanne Barr of Saturday Dinette, The Gladstone and Kid Chocolate; and renegade Toronto chef Charlotte Langley.

Gallus produces for Red Queen Productions, the company she co-founded with Justine Pimlott to focus on cutting-edge films about women, social issues, culture and the arts. *The Heat* is made in co-production with Howard Fraiberg, the film was commissioned by TVO and Documentary Channel and funded by Canada Media Fund, Rogers Documentary Fund, and Ted Rogers Hot Docs Fund.

Vesna Cudic, Head of Sales at Met Film Sales, negotiated the deal with the filmmakers. She said, "*The Heat* assembles a fantastic cast of top chefs - all of them women - bursting with personality, skill, passion, and ambition. They are changing the face of the restaurant industry as we know it. The film could not be more timely, and we look forward to presenting it to the buyers in Cannes. "MetFilm Sales' Hot Docs slate also includes *The Feeling of Being Watched* and three Sundance titles: *Bisbee '17*, *Our New President*, and *The Oslo Diaries*.

<https://www.screendaily.com/news/metfilm-acquires-hot-docs-opener-the-heat-a-kitchen-revolution-exclusive/5128515.article>

In The Seats – April 24, 2018

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'BLOWIN' UP'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies, Theatrical by Victor Stiff - April 24, 2018

Blowin' Up chronicles a special court in Queens, New York that deals with female sex workers. This court allows women to undertake six counselling sessions to have their records wiped clean without fighting their charges. Director Stephanie Wang-Breal's documentary gives the sex workers a platform to share their stories while examining the impact of this special court.

Blowin' Up introduces the court's judge, a team of prosecutors, defence attorneys, and a community activist. Wang-Breal's film slowly drifts along as though you're sitting in a courtroom watching an actual criminal case. It's not *Judge Judy-level* loud and flashy but it is authentic. In this court, everyone works in unison to help the women who come through the system improve their lives. The forces that drive women into prostitution aren't as black and white as movies and TV would have us believe. In many cases, women are trapped, blackmailed, and shamed into staying by vicious men. And their devastating first-hand accounts stay with you well after the film.

The court's judge, Toko Serita, won me over right away. Early on, she senses a woman's panic and puts her at ease with a warm smile. You understand she's there to guide rather than punish. I marvelled at the amount of passion and enthusiasm Judge Serita and her team bring to work each day. I couldn't cope with what they deal with on a daily basis and remain positive. They're literally doing work that saves lives, making the film's final stretch — as the Trump administration comes to power and threatens their work — even more heartbreaking.

Blowin' Up opens a window into Judge Serita's courtroom to champion the benefits of treating sex workers humanely. It's an engaging and insightful film that may have you questioning your stance on the entire criminal justice system.

Blowin' Up showtimes:

Tuesday, May 01, 6:45 PM, Hart House Theatre

Thursday, May 03, 12:30 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 01

Saturday, May 05, 9:00 PM, Revue Cinema

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-blowin-up/>

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'CALL HER GANDA'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Paolo Kagaoan - April 24, 2018

Trans women do not exist within a vacuum – they belong to communities, sociopolitical food chains, and their families. This is especially true with Jennifer 'Ganda' Laude, a woman that her mother Julita remembers fondly. The silver lining when it comes to movies like *Call Her Ganda* is that we'll always remember Ganda. This also means that Ganda belongs to a statistic. She is one of many Filipino trans women who died under American soldiers' hands.

The way the film visually depicts Ganda is its most problematic aspect. It either shows her through her selfie videos and through graphic crime scene photos. I can already imagine the arguments for and against the decision to show the latter. These images are – a surprising theme during this year's festival – part of an incomplete puzzle. She'll always be a mystery to us especially since she didn't have to be where she was that night.

The documentary also serves as a portrait of the Philippines' persecuted trans community. This includes their families, and their allies as they try to bring justice to what happened to Ganda. I already mentioned Julita, the film's first talking head, who experiences both emotional and financial turmoil after Ganda's death. There's also Meredith Talusan, a Filipino American trans female journalist. She is trying to bring awareness to Ganda's story to Filipino and worldwide consciousness.

The main challenge that these two women face is a flawed justice system. American soldiers in the Philippines usually do not receive prosecution under Philippine law. Talusan and director-producer PJ Raval connect this simple crime case to 500 years of colonial and trans-phobic history. They mostly make their case in that regard. They could have gone into the weeds as to how the case complexities. But the movie adequately gives both information and an empathetic push.

Call Her Ganda is premiering at the Isabel Bader Theatre on April 28 at 9:15 PM. It's also screening at the TIFF Bell Lightbox at April 29 at 3:45 PM. Last show is at the Scotiabank Theatre on May 6 at 5:45 PM.

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-call-her-ganda/>

Hot Docs review: Constructing Albert

Portrait of El Bulli chef Albert Adrià, desperate to make his own name, will leave you exhausted – and hungry for his creations

BY NATALIA MANZOCCO

APRIL 24, 2018

1:48 PM



CONSTRUCTING ALBERT (Laura Collado, Jim Loomis, Spain/Estonia). 82 minutes. Rating: NNNN

I felt tired just watching *Constructing Albert* — which can only be a testament to the accuracy of **Laura Collado** and **Jim Loomis**’s portrait of chef **Albert Adrià** as he continually invents and reinvents his restaurant empire over a four-year span.

Long known as the second banana to his brother Ferran at groundbreaking Spanish eatery El Bulli, Albert is desperate to make his own name. That fuels a thirst for culinary perfection and originality that not even two Michelin stars (which he scores early in the film for a pair of restaurants, one of which he promptly dismantles) can appease.

Whether he’s fussing over an impossible-looking new dish, pep-talking his staff, accepting a lofty prize or lamenting some substandard detail in one of his dizzying, tough-to-keep-straight array of new projects (which the filmmakers admittedly could have delineated more clearly in editing), the look of laser-focused concentration never leaves the chef’s face.

Adrià always seems to be reaching for some notion of excellence just beyond the borders of definition. The directors position the opening of Enigma, Adrià’s crown jewel restaurant, at the film’s finale — which, given the chef’s boundless drive and ambition, feels more like a “to be continued” than a neat bow on his story.

May 2, 7 pm, TIFF 1; May 4, 1:30 pm, TIFF 3; May 5, 11 am, TIFF 2

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-constructing-albert/>

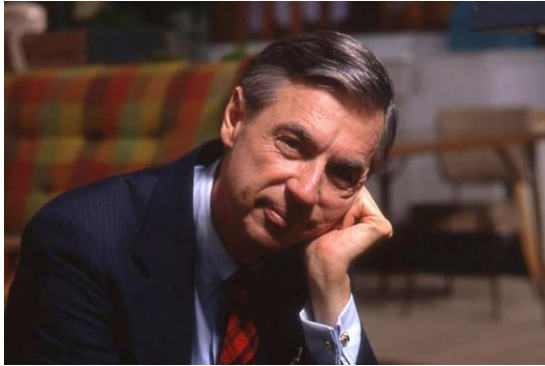
Hot Docs review: Won't You Be My Neighbor?

Morgan Neville's film shows how TV icon Mr. Rogers fearlessly dealt with profound issues on his show for pre-school children

BY **SUSAN G. COLE**

APRIL 24, 2018

1:41 PM



WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR? (Morgan Neville, U.S.). 93 minutes. Rating: NNNN

This must have been an inspiring change of pace for Morgan Neville, who recently made a film about the toxic feud between bitter political rivals William F. Buckley and Gore Vidal.

Here, he takes on beloved children's TV composer, writer and host Fred Rogers, tracing his career from Presbyterian minister to TV icon. Via Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, his show for pre-school children, he fearlessly dealt with profound issues – assassination, war, racism among them – all along demonstrating, never preaching, love.

Rogers wasn't a saint – see his initial response to a co-worker's gayness – but Neville's portrait is nevertheless of a gifted and exceptional human being. The doc is conventional, featuring interviews with Rogers's family and collaborators, clips from the show and additional animation – which is becoming de rigueur these days – and Neville mistakenly lumps Pee Wee Herman into the makers of trash and bash children's fare that Rogers tried to counter.

It's Rogers himself who makes this movie remarkable.

Apr 28, 6:30 pm (Big Ideas screening), Apr 29, 1 pm, May 6, 12:45 pm, all at Hot Docs Cinema

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-won-t-you-be-my-neighbor/>

Hot Docs review: I'm Leaving Now

Lindsey Cordero and Armando Croda investigate the life of a Mexican man preparing to return home after 16 years in America

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 24, 2018

1:33 PM



I'M LEAVING NOW (Lindsey Cordero, Armando Croda, US, Mexico). 74 minutes. Rating: NNN

I'm Leaving Now tells the story of a man whose life is in stasis: Felipe Hernández is a Mexican citizen who's lived in America for 16 years, doing odd jobs to send money home to his family.

Finally, he's ready to leave New York City and return to his wife and the teenage son he hasn't seen since he left – except that he keeps putting off the trip.

Directors Lindsey Cordero and Armando Croda want to investigate Felipe's conflicted soul – which he does his best to repress for their cameras, affecting a happy-go-lucky attitude and only revealing himself in moments when we see him trying to start a romantic relationship with a woman who doesn't seem terribly thrilled at the prospect.

That conflict – especially in the context of Felipe's tearful phone calls home – gives I'm Leaving Now a strong emotional current, which the filmmakers muddy with dramatizations and stylized shots that snap us out of the moment. The ground-level realism is much more effective.

April 28, 6 pm, Scotiabank 7; April 30, 2:45 pm, TIFF 4; May 6, 5:30 pm, TIFF 4

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-i-m-leaving-now/>

Hot Docs review: I, Dolours

A former IRA member's story comes to vivid, brutal life in Maurice Sweeney's hybrid documentary

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 24, 2018

1:27 PM



I, DOLOURS (Maurice Sweeney, Ireland). 82 minutes. Rating: NNNN

In 2010, journalist Ed Moloney sat down with former IRA member Dolours Price for a wide-ranging interview – under the condition that it be locked away until after Price's death.

Price died in 2013, and now Maurice Sweeney's hybrid documentary illustrates that conversation with elaborate re-enactments to create a decades-spanning study of what it meant – and what it cost – to be a Republican in Northern Ireland.

The bulk of the film is composed of those re-enactments, in which Price and her sister and comrade Marian are played by Lorna Larkin and Gail Brady, respectively. I'm usually put off by re-creations in documentaries, but the stylistic choices Sweeney makes allow us to understand that we're seeing an interpretation of Price's memories rather than a strict factual accounting.

It's an important distinction, and one that works very well. *I, Dolours* brings Price's story – which included seven years in an English prison for the 1973 bombing of the Old Bailey – to vivid, brutal life.

April 28, 6 pm, TIFF 3; April 29, 1 pm, Isabel Bader; May 6, 8:15 pm, TIFF 4

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-i-dolours/>

Hot Docs review: Pick Of The Litter

Film about training Labrador retrievers as Guide Dogs for the Blind is delightful and effective

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 24, 2018

1:15 PM



PICK OF THE LITTER (Dana Nachman, Don Hardy, U.S.). 79 minutes. Rating: NNNN

There are few things more delightful than Labrador retriever puppies, and *Pick Of The Litter* knows it, following five dogs over their first two years of life as they're placed with foster families by Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Producer/directors **Dana Nachman** (*Batkid Begins*) and **Don Hardy** lean into the adorability of it all – and really, how could they not? – but they've also constructed a thoughtful film about the exacting selection process for guide dogs, and the bonds that form between the pups and the people who've agreed to raise them for a limited span of time. (Not everyone fully understands the emotional investment, which leads to some painful moments when the time comes for a given pup to move forward in his or her training.)

The dogs are totally winning, and the complexity of their training is fascinating. The packaging is maybe a little on the cutesy side, but as an infomercial for Guide Dogs for the Blind, it's undeniably effective.

May 2, 9 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 4, 1 pm, Isabel Bader; May 6, 3:15 pm, TIFF 1

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-pick-of-the-litter/>

Hot Docs review: Playing Hard

Jean-Simon Chartier's film about the creation and production of the Ubisoft video game For Honor is as flashy and busy as a clip reel

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 24, 2018

1:03 PM



PLAYING HARD (Jean-Simon Chartier, Canada/U.S.). 90 minutes. Rating: NNN

Gamer alert: *Playing Hard* tracks the genesis and production of the Ubisoft battle game *For Honor* from the first pitch in late 2013 to its release in early 2017.

Embedding himself in the Montreal office, **Jean-Simon Chartier** shapes the story around creative director **Jason VandenBerghe**, a self-styled warrior poet who says he's been developing this game in his head for more than a decade.

VandenBerghe aims to reconceptualize video-game fighting as more than just a series of combinations on a controller; he wants players to truly inhabit the Viking, samurai or knight they've chosen as their avatar. It's up to Ubisoft's senior producer **Stéphane Cardin** and director of communications **Luc Duchaine** to make that dream a reality, and sell it to the world.

But watching people code is boring, so Chartier goes for the glamour, turning *Playing Hard* into a whirl of team meetings, motion-capture sessions, trailer footage, convention launches, promotional tours and celebrity events.

That angle is flashy and busy, sure – but it also turns the movie into a clip reel, muting *For Honor*'s human element to the point that a climactic revelation about personality conflicts that

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have apparently been bubbling under the surface all along feels like it comes out of nowhere. A sharper edit could have at least acknowledged that stuff, even if footage wasn't available.

May 2, 9:15 pm, TIFF 2; May 3, 2:45 pm, Scotiabank 13; May 4, 8:15 pm, Scotiabank 3

Hot Docs review: Bachman

John Barnard's documentary about BTO and the Guess Who's Randy Bachman merely ticks off items on the Behind The Music career-arc checklist

BY RICHARD TRAPUNSKI

APRIL 24, 2018

12:46 PM



BACHMAN (John Barnard, Canada). 80 minutes. Rating: NN

Many of the best music documentaries of the last decade or so have either poked holes in the Boomer-codified canon of rock history or revelled in its excess. Bachman does neither. It's a straightforward biography of **Randy Bachman**, a guy whose success is self-evident – multiple number-one singles with multiple bands, namely the Guess Who and Bachman-Turner Overdrive – but who, as a subject, is just not all that interesting.

It's made up mostly of talking-head interviews with people like his one-hit-wonder son **Tal Bachman** and **Neil Young** (interviewed sitting in a Muskoka chair at a cottage) and archival footage. It touches on some interesting topics, like the band's early obfuscation of their

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Canadian identity and their influence on CanCon regulations – but director **John Barnard** mostly breezes by them to hit the familiar Behind The Music career-arc checklist.

Except Bachman is a Mormon, so there's no sex and drugs, and his difficult relationships with his former bandmates were often a result of him being "the narc" (his words) in the group. We're told often how passionate and driven he is, but just as often shown how motivated he is by

monetary success. Bachman himself doesn't delve too deeply into self-examination – we hear more from others than from him, and every time he's interviewed it's with a guitar in his hand.

May 2, 9:30 pm, TIFF 1; May 3, 3:15 pm, TIFF 1; May 4, 6:30 pm, TIFF 2

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-randy-bachman-documentary/>

Hot Docs review: Alt-Right: Age Of Rage

Adam Bhala Lough's film captures the lead-up to the United the Right rally in Charlottesville last August

BY JAKE HOWELL

April 24, 2018

12:42 PM



ALT-RIGHT: AGE OF RAGE (Adam Bhala Lough, U.S.) 104 minutes. Rating: NNN

Adam Bhala Lough's *Alt-Right: Age Of Rage* feels like two movies in one. For the first hour or so, the documentary is a standard (albeit over-stuffed) back-and-forth between white supremacist Richard Spencer and Antifa member Daryle Lamont Jenkins, with supplementary commentary from American Renaissance's Jared Taylor and the Southern Poverty Law Center's Mark Potok.

Like a pot reaching a boil, these interviews lead up with disturbing momentum to the chaos of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, last August, which causes the film — as indeed America — to lose its composure. While the documentary can't figure out an elegant conclusion to this intensity, the images from the rally — including the tragic death of counter-protester Heather Heyer — are nevertheless a vital snapshot of violent racism's cyclical grip.

Apr 27, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; Apr 28, 1:15 pm, Isabel Bader; May 4, 3:45 pm, Hot Docs Cinema

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-alt-right-age-of-rage/>

Hot Docs review: United We Fan

Film about hardcore TV fandom avoids easy stereotypes or fringe characterizations

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 24, 2018

12:49 PM



UNITED WE FAN (Michael Sparaga, Canada). 97 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Without playing into easy stereotypes or fringe characterizations, *United We Fan* explores the way beloved television series can bring people together – and even provoke them to action.

Michael Sparaga (*The Missing Ingredient*) draws a clear line from the passionate viewerships that created letter-writing campaigns to keep *Star Trek*, *St. Elsewhere* and *Cagney & Lacey* from cancellation to the modern age of online petitions and save-our-show stunts for the likes of *Chuck*, *Longmire* and *Jericho*.

Talking to creators as well as fans, Sparaga assembles a cheery collage of anecdotes about how popular culture brings people together and inspires them to fight for the things they love.

But he also explores the way viewer identification creates passionate support for a given show – and how an audience's sense of ownership might start to conflict with the stories that show's creators want to tell.

April 28, 5:30 pm, Scotiabank 4; April 30, 3 pm, May 3, 12:15 pm, Hart House

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-united-we-fan/>

Hot Docs review: The Trolley

Special free screening of Stephen Low's doc about the humble streetcar is more suited to a transportation museum than a world-class film festival

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

April 24, 2018

12:33 PM



THE TROLLEY (Stephen Low, Canada). 45 minutes. Rating: NN

The Trolley celebrates the humble streetcar, charting its adoption in the early 20th century, its diminishment in American cities as car culture swept the nation in the years after the Second World War, and its return to prominence in the present, as European and North American cities alike begin to adopt rights-of-way for public transit.

The project's shooting title was The Trolley That Saved The World, which should give you a sense of the relentlessly upbeat approach applied by veteran IMAX director **Stephen Low** (Titanica, Legends Of Flight), who wants to tell the story of a feisty, environmentally friendly technology that survived an all-out assault by the evil forces of Big Car.

It's aimed squarely at children, with plenty of footage of kids beaming as they ride the TTC's Red Rocket, and the result is a movie that seems more suited for a transportation museum than a documentary festival – which may be why Hot Docs is screening it as a special free event at Cinesphere rather than as part of the festival proper. Tickets are available at the Hot Docs box office on a first-come, first-served basis.

May 5, 3 pm, Ontario Place Cinesphere

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-the-trolley/>

Hot Docs review: Dreaming Murakami

Quiet doc observes translator for Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami

BY **GLENN SUMI**

APRIL 24, 2018

12:34 PM



DREAMING MURAKAMI (Nitesh Anjaan, Denmark). 58 minutes. Rating: NNN

Dane **Mette Holm** has translated the Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami's books for close to 20 years, and this quiet doc observes her as she works on his latest release – the double bill of *Hear The Wind Sing* and *Pinball*, reissues of his earliest novels – and then gets set to interview the man himself in Copenhagen.

The introverted Holm isn't a very engaging or articulate subject, but director **Nitesh Anjaan** includes some of her illuminating letters and photos, discussions about literary minutiae with other translators and even an absurd trip to a pinball arcade to study the game.

A CGI frog (a reference to one of the author's famous stories) adds a fitting surreal touch, but the best sequences come from Holm's casual talks with Japanese bartenders and sushi restaurant owners, shedding light on a gradually changing country.

Apr 27, 9:15 pm, Scotiabank 4; Apr 29, 10 am, TIFF 2; May 4, 4:15 pm, TIFF 2

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-dreaming-murakami/>

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Hot Docs review: Maj Doris

Director Jon Blåhed profiles legendary Sámi artist and activist who lives above the Arctic Circle in Norway

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

April 24, 2018

12:12 PM



MAJ DORIS (Jon Blåhed, Sweden/Norway). 73 minutes. Rating: NN

Several prominent women artists and public figures have been the subject of documentaries this year, but a lesser-known entry in this 2018 documentary mini-trend is this film about Maj Doris Rimpi, 74-year-old Sámi artist and activist who lives alone above the Arctic Circle in Norway.

Director Jon Blåhed and cinematographer Jimmy Sundin frame Rimpi against vast snowy landscapes as she tends to a herd of seasonally visiting reindeer with help from a refugee from Afghanistan. There is little in the way of archive or narrative thrust, though two instances of travel suggest a balance between her devotion to preserving Indigenous culture and a desire to experience the world. We only get glimpses of her work, so it's hard to grasp the extent of her impact.

She is clearly inspiring and this doc is gorgeous to look at, but the filmmakers never find a way to bring their thematic strands together.

Apr 27, 8:30 pm, TIFF 4; Apr 29, noon, TIFF 3; May 6, 6:30 pm, TIFF 3

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-maj-doris/>

Hot Docs review: Ubiquity

Director Bregtje van der Haak explores electromagnetic hypersensitivity through the lives of three people

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 24, 2018

12:04 PM



UBIQUITY (Bregtje van der Haak, Netherlands, Belgium). 82 minutes. Rating: NNN

The latest documentary about people with electromagnetic hypersensitivity (after last year's *The Quiet Zone*) looks at the phenomenon from the perspective of three people struggling to minimize their exposure to electromagnetic fields, largely represented here as cell coverage and WiFi. In an era of global coverage, how does one live away from the literal grid?

Ubiquity explores that question through the lives of three people – a young woman out to stop the proliferation of digital electricity meters in Japan, a wife and mother in the Netherlands obsessed with cell towers and a middle-aged Swedish man who's retreated to a cabin in the countryside and insists on being filmed with a mechanical camera rather than digital equipment.

Director Bregtje van der Haak (*Satellite Queens*, *DNA Dreams*) isn't out to challenge her subjects or explore the science behind their conditions; she wants us to understand what it's like to live their lives, occasionally deploying high-pitched sound effects or fragmented editing to that end.

The use of Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg as an avatar of connectivity doesn't land as well as it might have a few months ago, and a last-minute shift into advocacy doesn't work at all. But in its

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quieter moments, when it glimpses a world slowly being overtaken by cables and circuitry, Ubiquity gets at something unsettling about the way we live now.

April 27, 5:30 pm, TIFF 3; April 28, 4 pm, TIFF 1; May 5, 7 pm, TIFF 3

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Hot Docs review: Victory Day

Ukrainian filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa observes the people converging on the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin on May 9

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

April 24, 2018

11:53 AM



VICTORY DAY (Sergei Loznitsa, Germany). 94 minutes. Rating: NN

Ukrainian filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa set up shop at the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin's Treptower Park to capture the festivities on Victory Day, a holiday in former Soviet states on May 9 that marks the Red Army's defeat of the Nazis in World War II.

Unlike Remembrance Day in Canada, their vibe is more celebratory than solemn and the diaspora descending on Berlin transform the park into a street festival.

The director films an officer reciting the names of the war dead, but Loznitsa is more interested in singers, conspiratorial agitators and other energetic figures in the crowd. His focus on everyday people versus the military pomp that would be on display in Moscow feels political, and segments are preceded by images of the war scenes on the memorial.

But Victory Day is observational to a fault; its distance from the action makes it difficult to connect meaningfully to those at the memorial. It's an outsider experience and perhaps that's the point. But watching the doc feels like drifting aimlessly through a party where you don't know anyone and then leaving without talking to anyone.

Apr 27, 2:45 pm, TIFF 3; Apr 28, 3:15 pm, Scotiabank 7; May 5, 8:15 pm, Scotiabank 3

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-victory-day/>

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Hot Docs review: The Game Changers

The Cove director Louis Psihoyos's latest film follows elite athletes thriving on plant-based diets

BY SUSAN G. COLE

APRIL 24, 2018

11:46 AM



THE GAME CHANGERS (Louis Psihoyos, Canada/U.S.). 88 minutes. Rating: NNN

Louis Psihoyos follows elite athletes who have thrived on plant-based diets, overturning the argument that a vegetarian regimen will weaken you.

With UFC fighter James Wilks leading the way, the pic spotlights everyone from track-and-field star Carl Lewis to Arnold Schwarzenegger and beyond, making a strong case for saying no to meat.

But when the pic turns to science it gets confusing. A segment on the meat industry's marketing techniques is too long – just compare it to tobacco strategies and be done with it. And the film's appeal to vanity and men's virility is problematic. Better to concentrate more on how plant-based diets could save the planet.

Apr 27, 6 pm, TIFF 1; Apr 28, 10:30 am, Isabel Bader; May 5, 12:45 pm, Hot Docs Cinema

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-the-game-changers/>

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Hot Docs review: I Used To Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story

Occasionally charming and awkwardly sentimental film explores pop fandom

BY RADHEYAN SIMONPILLAI

April 24, 2018

11:58 AM



I USED TO BE NORMAL: A BOYBAND FANGIRL STORY (Jessica Leski, Australia). 96 minutes.

Rating: **NN**

Early on in this occasionally charming and awkwardly sentimental doc about fangirls, a woman stands against a whiteboard. She's mapping out the similarities between boy bands who have frenzied the coming-of-age stories among countless girls across decades.

The woman, a lifelong Take That fangirl, lays out the film's thesis: the connective tissue (looks, themes, appeals) between the Beatles, Backstreet Boys, One Direction and their fans. Boyz II Men get mentioned and just as quickly dismissed as too overtly sexual to fit the bill. Just like that, half the girls I went to elementary school with had their pubescent fantasies brushed aside in a documentary that doesn't realize a deeper, more prickly conversation was right there giving it sex eyes.

Apr 26, 9:15 pm, TIFF 1; Apr 27, noon, Hart House; May 4, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; May 6, 12:30 pm, Hart House

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-i-used-to-be-normal/>

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Hot Docs review: Yours In Sisterhood

Film about letters sent to Ms. Magazine makes clear that most issues preoccupying women in the 70s have not gone away

BY **SUSAN G. COLE**

APRIL 24, 2018

11:35 AM



YOURS IN SISTERHOOD (Irene Lusztig, U.S.). 100 minutes. Rating: NNN

In this very straightforward pic, letters sent to Ms. Magazine in the 70s are read in the present by women from the same towns as the letter-writers. The readers then comment on whether and how the letters resonate with them.

Many of the original documents are simply testimonials from women who have never been able to describe their own experience. Some are from those whom Ms. left out of its pages so often: Black women, lesbians, women with disabilities, for example. Others complain about Ms.'s bias against female anti-abortion activists.

The readers are diverse and candid, but this doc has no dramatic pretensions or narrative arc, per se. It's the trove of letters that matters. The film's value lies in uncovering the voices seldom heard at the time the letters were written, while pointing out how near impossible it is for one magazine to satisfy all women.

It's also clear that almost all of the issues preoccupying women in the 70s have not gone away.

Apr 28, 6:45 pm, TIFF 2; Apr 29, 3:45 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 5, 5:45 pm, Fox

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-yours-in-sisterhood/>

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Hot Docs review: Pumpkin Movie

Two women trade stories of misogyny while carving pumpkins in Sophy Romvari's experimental work

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 24, 2018



PUMPKIN MOVIE (Sophy Romvari, Canada). 10 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Screening in the Silence Breakers shorts program, Sophy Romvari's experimental work presents itself as a Skype conversation between the filmmaker in her Toronto apartment and her friend Leah Collins Lipsett in Halifax, who idly trade stories of everyday misogyny while they each carve a Halloween pumpkin.

All the stories are true, taken from their lives and the lives of friends. And in just 10 minutes, Pumpkin Movie conveys a weary sense of just how exhausting it is for young women to live in a society that seems designed to remind them of their vulnerability and relative status. The fact that these two women are having this conversation while wielding large knives is its own mordant commentary.

April 26, 8:45 pm, TIFF 3; April 27, 12:45 pm, TIFF 2; May 5, 5:45 pm, Scotiabank 7

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/pumpkin-movie-hot-docs/>

NOW Magazine – April 24, 2018

Hot Docs review: Queercore: How To Punk A Revolution

German-made doc gives an efficient overview of the underground music and art movement with strong Toronto roots

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

April 24, 2018

11:23 AM



Daniel Nicoletta

The 1989 San Francisco Pride Parade became a meeting point for queercore kids.

QUEERCORE: HOW TO PUNK A REVOLUTION (Yony Leyser, Germany). 80 minutes. Rating: NNN

This efficient overview of queercore – a punk response to patriarchy and gay conformism in the 80s – charts how a small group of oppositional LGBT artists in Toronto eventually influenced aspects of the U.S. rock 'n' roll mainstream.

If you've seen Scott Treleaven's *Queercore (A Punk-u-mentary)* or Kevin Hegge's *She Said Boom: The Story Of Fifth Column*, not a lot will be new here. **Bruce LaBruce**, **G.B. Jones**, **Kathleen Hanna** and others supply wit and context, but a token John Waters appearance adds absolutely nothing.

It's interesting to think about the endurance of queercore's politics, but director **Yony Leyser** is less interested in exploring how these artists evolved than where they came from. As such, the most fascinating figure is **Lynn Breedlove**, singer for raunchy San Fran dyke band Tribe 8. The band's performance footage is bonkers and she adds emotion, complexity and honesty that's missing from other interviews.

Apr 27, 9:15 pm, Hart House; Apr 28, 3:45 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 4, 9:15 pm, Hart House
<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-queercore-punk-a-revolution/>

NOW Magazine – April 24, 2018

Hot Docs review: Chef Flynn

Director Cameron Yates celebrates teen chef Flynn McGarry, who has been offering \$160 dinner tasting menus at his restaurant since at age 11

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 24, 2018

1:53 PM



CHEF FLYNN (Cameron Yates, U.S.). 83 minutes. Rating: NNN

As a kid in the San Fernando Valley, Flynn McGarry dazzled his parents with complex menus; by the time he was 11, he'd turned their living room into a makeshift fine-dining restaurant called Eureka, offering a \$160 tasting menu to select diners.

Chef Flynn is a celebration of its subject rather than an inquiry into his specific skills; director Yates (*The Canal Street Madam*) seems content to follow the prodigy from one event to the next as he tours the world and plans his big New York opening, filtering out any major conflicts that might distract us from scenes of Flynn obsessing over beet recipes or creating the perfect garnish.

The result is a doc that probably made the McGarry family very happy, while proving frustrating to anyone who understands how documentaries are made and how restaurants work.

April 28, 6:45 pm, Isabel Bader; April 29, 10:45 am, TIFF 1; May 5, 1:15 pm, Isabel Bader

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-chef-flynn/>

Gender Parity at Film Festivals: Hot Docs Programmer Says ‘There’s Great Demand for As Many Diverse Voices As Possible’

Now in its 25th year, the documentary-focused festival has a gender-balanced directorial slate for the first time.

Kate Erbland

Apr 25, 2018 11:47 am



On the scene at Hot Docs

T. Andrew Morton

When this year’s Hot Docs festival kicks off later this week in Toronto, the documentary-focused event will open with a historic lineup that speaks to the sea change currently sweeping the industry. For the first time in its 25 year history, the festival has embraced gender parity among its picks, with a gender-balanced lineup of filmmakers across 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects. A full 50 percent of this year’s films are directed by women, and that’s not by accident.

“It is something that we’ve been wanting to move towards for quite a while,” director of programming Shane Smith told IndieWire in a recent interview. “This is something that, like curating a diverse and interesting program, is always on our radar. It’s something that we wanted to achieve.” In 2017, the program was 48% women directors. “This year we knew going in if we could make it happen that we would like to do it,” Smith said.

What may have sounded like a constraint to others — as former programmer Dan Schoenbrun previously noted, over the past 10 years, no major market festival has delivered a slate with at least 50 percent of films directed by female filmmakers — was easy for Shane and his crew of fellow programmers.

Indie Wire – April 25, 2018 (2 of 3)

“We weren’t going to force ourselves into any contortions to make it happen,” Smith said. “We wanted to see what the work was like and what was being made and what would submitted to us. We had no trouble when we started evaluating the work and looking at it and discussing it, no trouble in reaching a parity this year.”

Smith pointed to a number of highlights from this year’s slate that show off the range of picks they were able to program, including the Silence Breakers program (rooted in a theme of “women speaking up and having their voices heard”), along with films like Sarah Menzies’ “Afghan Cycles,” Christina D. King and Elizabeth A. Castle’s “Warrior Women,” Kelly Showker’s “Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial” (an “incredibly provocative and powerful film”), and the opening night gala, Maya Gallus’ “The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution.”

As Hot Docs prepares to open, another big annual festival is winding down: Tribeca, which is also attempting to reach gender parity with its programming. This year, the festival crafted a slate of films that include 48 percent directed by women. Like Hot Docs, parity is an acknowledged aim of their programming process.

“Women’s voices are being heard louder and certainly there are more women’s voices,” festival co-founder and current chief executive officer of Tribeca Enterprises Jane Rosenthal said at a recent lunch honoring the festival’s many female filmmakers. “The festival this year said, ‘Let try to get to 50-50 in our programming,’ and that’s not like something that was difficult for us. We are about the stories that women tell.”

Both Hot Docs and Tribeca benefit from female-led teams — the majority of Tribeca Enterprises’ staff is female, while two-thirds of the Hot Docs programming team is made up women — who bring a different perspective to choosing films for festival that, as the programmers themselves suggested, might not be present in other selection committees.

“When you look through a particular filter or you make a decision to look at work in a particular way, you start to see new elements, new avenues, new stories,” Smith said. “Two-thirds of the programming team is women, so they’re looking at work in a particular way as well. It’s a very

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subjective business that we're in, but they are seeing stories for audiences, for communities, in work that is being submitted to us that we really appreciate and want to provide a platform for."

Programmers at both festivals stressed that the push for gender parity was a responsibility for the industry as a whole. "It's our responsibility as curators to represent the film landscape not only as we see it, but also to lead the way towards the future as we would like to see it, and a key part of that is gender parity," Tribeca's head of programming Cara Cusomano told IndieWire. "We hope that this next step closer to 50-50 helps push us all in our industry towards a future of more equality, inclusion, and opportunity."

There was one aspect that distinguishes Hot Docs' programming approach from other festivals: the documentary world benefits from a higher percentage of working women directors than the narrative side.

"I think there's a deeper bench, a stronger foundation of female filmmakers and producers in the documentary world," Smith said. "We have great talent and stories to draw and they're telling good stories and making good films, important films that capture the conversation that's happening right now."

He added, "I hope that people can see that there is so much work out there if you look for it, if you dig for it. I think we just have to do what we think is the right thing to do, but also pay attention to the kind of work that's being made and the different ways that stories are being told by different filmmakers from different culturally diverse backgrounds, different genders."

As other festivals struggle to reach parity, but the example that Hot Docs provides a major precedent. "At the very least, we're asking the question and putting it into minds that we are interested in that work and that maybe they should be also continuing to look for work made by female filmmakers because there's an audience," he said. "I think we all need to do our bit really to just try and support that in any way that we can."

The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival runs April 26 – May 6.

<http://www.indiewire.com/2018/04/hot-docs-2018-festival-gender-parity-1201956452/>

Celebrating 25 Years of Documentary Film at Hot Docs

BY SANDRA IGNAGNI



The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. Photo: Joseph Michael Howarth.

Over the coming days, hundreds of filmmakers and industry professionals from across the globe will land in Toronto, Canada, to participate in the Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival—North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market. Documentary film, widely celebrated as Canada's national art form, has found a welcoming embrace in Toronto, and the upcoming edition, which runs from April 26 to May 6, marks an impressive quarter-century of preeminence in the documentary community.

Founded in 1993 by the Documentary Organization of Canada (formerly the Canadian Independent Film Caucus), Hot Docs was initially an artist-run undertaking, by filmmakers for filmmakers, designed to create opportunities to showcase their work. Over the past 25 years, the festival's audience has grown from 7,000 to a remarkable 215,000 in 2017. According to Brett Hendrie, Hot Docs' executive director, the growth of the public side of the festival has been "tremendous," and due in large part to Toronto's voracious appetite for documentary. Living in one of the most diverse cultural hubs in North America, Torontonians, Hendrie explains, are "keenly interested in international stories and sophisticated in terms of their film tastes—they aren't scared of navigating a film festival, let alone a documentary one."

If supportive audiences have been key to the festival's longevity, Hot Docs has certainly nurtured the city's innate curiosity towards global storytelling through several crafted

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community engagement initiatives. The festival's strategy has largely centered on building year-round audiences. Hendrie cites Doc Soup as an important example. The subscription program offers continuous opportunities to watch nonfiction film, and functions as a de facto "documentary-of-the-month club." Launched in 2001 with less than 50 people, the program now attracts 1,000 monthly subscribers.

Over the past decade, the festival has also taken important steps to ensure accessibility to its films through free daytime screenings for seniors and students, screenings for recent newcomers to Canada, and neighborhood screenings outside of Toronto's downtown core. In 2006, Hot Docs launched its Docs for Schools program, which brings free documentary screenings to 300 high schools across the province of Ontario and fosters deep collaboration with educators who weave documentary into their curricula and daily lesson plans. Last year alone, more than 100,000 students participated in the program. Docs for Schools, Hendrie explains, is both "hugely popular and such an important part of the festival's mandate of exposing a new generation to great documentaries."

Toronto is now also home to the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a 650-seat theater that caters exclusively to documentary aficionados. The idea came from a member of the festival's board of directors, who insisted that Toronto needed additional theatrical opportunities for documentary films, and was willing to enter into a decade-long partnership with the festival to launch the venture. Hendrie admits that, at the time of the theater's opening, "a lot of people said we were crazy and that it couldn't work." He recounts that "art house and independent cinemas were falling off the map and Toronto's independent cinemas had dwindled from 70 to about eight." Despite the risky context and the need for a major renovation of the art deco space located in Toronto's Annex neighborhood, the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema now holds screenings 364 days a year, and is supported by more than 8,000 committed members who provide a stable source of revenue for the venture.

The festival's ability to serve audiences is, of course, dependent on filmmakers' ability to produce compelling narratives. Recognizing the myriad challenges that filmmakers face in developing and completing documentaries, Hot Docs has sought to bolster financial support for filmmaking as a critical component of its documentary festival ecosystem. The festival launched its first production fund program in 2008—a \$4 million initiative sponsored by a Canadian broadcaster, which provided production grants and loans. Hendrie describes this milestone as an important "game-changer" for the organization, as it enabled the festival to put "cash directly in the hands of projects." Since that time, Hot Docs has launched multiple funds for filmmaking teams, a \$10 million portfolio that over the past 10 years has disbursed funds to both Canadian and international filmmakers. Collectively through these initiatives, Hot

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Docs has supported approximately 200 documentary films. "The program has become important in terms of how we think about the organization today; it is there to support filmmakers through the entire lifecycle of a film."

The centerpiece of industry programming at Hot Docs remains its Forum—a high-stakes pitching event that brings together a strong international cohort who vie for funding for their projects. Elizabeth Radshaw, industry programs director, describes the strength of the event as "its very global focus." Selected projects "reflect an important cross-section of the international documentary community, where first-time feature-length filmmakers and absolute masters, each with projects at varying stages of development," can present their pitches on a level playing field. The primary characteristic that unites the participants, explains Radshaw, is exceptional storytelling. With only 20 projects selected for the Forum and multiple chances to secure substantial funding packages, the odds of success are actually quite good.

Moreover, Hot Docs puts substantial effort into enhancing the competitiveness of selected participants. In the months leading up to the Forum, the festival staff works closely with teams to help them hone their pitch—everything from clarifying concepts to articulating clear goals—with the ultimate aim of helping filmmakers get the most out of the experience. The Forum illustrates "our coming together as a documentary community," Radshaw muses. Also important, she explains, are all of the other observers who are in the room during the pitches, from angel investors to programmers at other festivals, sales agents and potential co-production partners. "We've heard the most amazing stories under the sun, and it is not always about what transpires at the table, and at the microphones, but the connections and relationships that are built in the Forum itself with its many observers," she explains. "It's an excellent way to launch your film into the international documentary community." Built around this main industry event at Hot Docs are conference sessions, talks and keynote sessions. A diverse industry program, according to Radshaw, is important for fostering relevant conversations about critical issues in the documentary community, networking and opportunities for cross-collaboration across international delegations. Eleven Forum alumni were selected for this year's festival—a testament to the strength of the festival's industry programming, the rigorous training and support for its participants, and the commitment of funders who field pitches, even as their budgets have become squeezed in recent years.

While formal participation in industry programs can indeed enhance opportunities for a Hot Docs premiere, festival programmers are attentive to finding and bringing the best and most innovative films to the festival, irrespective of their industry connections or origins. "In the spirit of documentary," says Myrocia Watamaniuk, a senior international programmer at Hot Docs, "we have one of the most democratic festival submissions processes that I know of." Each

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submission, she explains, is carefully reviewed by at least two programmers. "I know filmmakers can be wary of festivals where you have to know someone, or have some kind of name recognition to get their films watched, but that isn't the case at Hot Docs."

Even with the festival's genuine commitment to advancing the careers of filmmakers from around the world, securing a spot in the 200-strong program is no small feat. In 2018, the festival received 3,000 feature-length submissions from 95 countries. Stories must not only be accessible, fresh and compelling, they must also offer "superior execution in terms of the visual world of the story." It is a tall order, but Watamaniuk notes that the festival maintains a healthy number of first-time filmmakers in its programming: "I've had the pleasure of discovering filmmakers who have gone on to do incredible work, become very well regarded, and have their future films made because of their track record at Hot Docs."

Seeing documentaries meet with success at the festival is incredibly gratifying for filmmakers and programmers alike, explains Watamaniuk. Filmmakers, often working alone in dark room, sometimes for years on end, finally "see the sun" when hundreds of people connect with their film in a packed theater. "A filmmaker sees how many people have come out—left their homes and paid money—to come to the theater to see their story," she notes. "And then, after the screening, when they hear the applause or see how many people stay to ask questions, they are moved beyond words...to tears—theirs and mine. Those moments take everyone's breath away."

http://transition.meltwater.com/redirect?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.documentary.org%2Fonline-feature%2Fcelebrating-25-years-documentary-film-hot-docs&transitionToken=eyJ0eXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzUxMiJ9.eyJkb3N0bmFtZSI6Ind3dy5kb2N1bWVu dGFyeS5vcmcifQ.SUD2qQLNYki5b_RxwaNaxc4G0vx5i8BvgAHOE70IDL4IFhmNB1i31B02ksmk38iaJWn21_P EZEyOHZEmM005Cw

Breakfast Television – April 25, 2018



VIDEOS

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Entertainment

Preview of what's to come at Hot Docs 2018

Director of Programming at Hot Docs 2018, Shane Smith, reveals what we can expect at this year's Hot Docs - including a documentary on beloved children's TV personality Mister Rogers.

April 25, 2018 08:24

<http://www.bttoronto.ca/videos/preview-of-whats-to-come-at-hot-docs-2018/>

Screen Anarchy – April 25, 2018

Hot Docs 2018 Curtain Raiser: From M.I.A. To MeToo

Kurt Halfyard

CONTRIBUTING WRITER; TORONTO, CANADA (@TRIFLIC)

North America's largest documentary film festival, Hot Docs, kicks off tomorrow with its 25th edition. And while the festival has always specialized in content focused on the margins of society and telling their stories, we are in the age of the #MeToo movement, and many of the films are shaded by this moment, even some of the retrospective screenings. Musical & TV personality driven documentaries, adventure stories, quirky character studies, as well as social and activist movements are of course well represented here. (And VR storytelling keeps edging further into the festival programming.)

Hot Docs is spread across more than half-a-dozen venues about town, from the festival's year-round home at the Bloor Cinema to the TIFF Lightbox, and the kinda-secret-but-wonderfully-atmospheric Hart House on the U of T Campus. There is even a screening in IMAX at the Ontario Place Cinesphere, as well as the cooler for being off the beaten path repertory houses: The Fox Theatre and The Revue Cinema.

<http://screenanarchy.com/2018/04/hot-docs-2018-curtain-raiser-from-mia-to-metoo-gallery.html>

Hot Docs Starts Tomorrow: A Few Films to Consider

April 25, 2018 2:08 pm | by Craig White | [0 Comments](#)

Hot Docs kicks off tomorrow for another year, ten days at various theatres throughout Downtown Toronto, with over 200 films to choose from. There is what feels like a limitless number of issues represented, but as always, we are here to highlight films that should be of particular interest to UrbanToronto readers; those that look at architecture, urban issues like transportation and housing, and even one where housing is an issue for an entire country. Some of the screenings listed below will have "gone rush" already, but if you don't have tickets, just get to the theatre early enough for the rush line: some tickets are held back for every screening.

The Trolley is a love letter to what we Torontonians know as the streetcar, and there's maybe never been a more *UrbanToronto* film ever shown at Hot Docs. This one is a 49-minute IMAX film, and it's showing just once, during the last weekend of Hot Docs, at the world's first IMAX cinema, the Cinesphere, for free on Saturday May 5 at 3 PM. (If you miss the Hot Docs presentation, it will be back for a regular run at some point.)



Aboard a double-decker tram in Hong Kong, from "The Trolley"

The film is shot here, more than anywhere else, but you'll also get to travel all over the world to experience systems in Milan, Hong Kong, Portland, Geneva, San Diego, Strasbourg, and on and on. Archival photography and film footage shines a light on the birth of the systems a hundred or more years ago, with some amazing clips of cars, trolleys, and horse-drawn carriages all competing for space of the streets of early 19th century America.



An articulated Flexity tram in Marseille, France, from "The Trolley"

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The film's narration tends toward hyperbole at times, and I'm 90% sure that 80% of the footage is being played at 150% of normal speed, so it all spins a little utopian, but there are some fun rides through the cities because of it, and anyone who loves to watch Toronto street life through streetcar windows as they glide along will leave with a smile on their face. And me, I want the bicycle version of this film now...



Riding the red rocket, Toronto, from "The Trolley"

As mentioned, The Trolley is only showing once during the last weekend of Hot Docs, at the Cinesphere at Ontario Place, for free, on Saturday May 5 at 3 PM. The only trick is that you have to pick up tickets in person at the Hot Docs box office at the Bloor Cinema, two tickers max per person, and they're reportedly going fast.

From urban transportation in The Trolley, we move to involuntary urban transformation in **52 Seconds**.



A bystander in awe of how his city has turned to rubble in a scene from Javier Andrade's 52 Seconds

52 Seconds tells the story of Portoviejo, Ecuador, and what it was like in the city of a quarter million people in the aftermath of the April 2016 earthquake that left 671 people dead and thousands homeless. In the film, director Javier Andrade is summoned back to his hometown by his father, whose place of business is in ruins. Andrade personalizes the film, making it as much about memory and the loss places that have shaped us when disaster strikes, as it is about living through the tough times that follow and coming to grips with rubble clearance and then

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rebuilding. If you've ever wondered what it might feel like if your city and life were turned upside down, *52 Seconds* offers a glimpse of the things that can test people.



A religious congregation lights candles mid-procession in a scene from Javier Andrade's *52 Seconds*

52 Seconds plays three times at the Scotiabank Theatre; on Thursday, May 3 at 5:30 PM, Friday, May 4 at 2:15 PM, and Saturday, May 5 at 8:30 PM.

From a destructive moment that changes everything in *52 Seconds*, we move to an inexorable decades-long destruction in **Anote's Ark** that, no matter how long you have to plan for it, when it involves an entire country, it may not be enough.



Young men build a wall of sandbags to protect against flooding in Kiribati, from *Anote's Ark*

Matthieu Rytz's film *Anote's Ark* is at times stunningly beautiful—as befits the idyllic islands of Kiribati (pronounced Kiribass)—but it gets down to business covering the efforts underway to save the country. An archipelago astride both the international dateline and the equator, Kiribati's landmass is all atoll: low-lying islands atop coral outcrops, and considered to be the country most likely to disappear first because of rising oceans. Much of the film follows Anote Tong, the eloquent (now former) President of Kiribati and a passionate climate change activist as he travels the world to raise awareness of the plight of his country and others like it.



Above threatened Tarawa Island, Kiribati, from Anote's Ark

Rytz also follows Sermay, a Kiribati islander who will do whatever it takes to keep her kids dry and happy, including moving to New Zealand to work to provide for her family when unprecedented flooding gets to be too much.



Sermay and one of her children in Kiribati, from Anote's Ark

Anote's Ark plays as part of Scotia Wealth Management's BIG IDEAS series at the Hot Docs Cinema on Tuesday, May 1 at 6:30 PM, when President Tong will be in attendance for a Q&A following the screening. He may be in attendance for a repeat on Wednesday, May 2 at 10:15 AM at the TIFF Bell Lightbox. A third screening takes place at the Lightbox on Friday, May 4 at 1 PM.

Hot Docs films take on the myth and mystery of celebrity

KATE TAYLOR

PUBLISHED APRIL 25, 2018UPDATED APRIL 25, 2018



In *The Bill Murray Stories*, director Tommy Avallone goes looking for the truth behind various urban legends about Murray sightings and discovers they are all for real.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Bill Murray once helped a Los Angeles street vendor serve ice-cream cones to a film crew. Joe Nicchi tells the story in *The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man*, a documentary about the American actor's habit of turning up unannounced at other people's gatherings. "I know he's just a person, but to me he was more than that," Nicchi says as he describes the famous comedian working alongside him inside the ice-cream truck.

Nobody interviewed in this doc doubts that Murray is anything but extremely special. They reminisce, they laugh; they gush: the time Bill Murray crashed their kickball game; the time he crashed their party; the time he not only crashed their party but did the dishes, too. What they don't do is ask themselves how they might react if some old balding guy they didn't recognize knocked on their door and assumed he would be welcome to join in.

This year's Hot Docs festival features a clutch of documentaries that have a lot to say about celebrity and fandom – some of it despite themselves.

With the famous name right there in the title, the one that will probably get the most attention is *The Bill Murray Stories*. Director Tommy Avallone goes looking for the truth behind various urban legends about Murray sightings and discovers they are all for real, as testified to by people who were present at the time: Asked for a mere photo, Murray instead sings Happy Birthday to a 94-year-old grandmother at a ballgame; dropping by a local watering hole during a music festival in Austin, Tex., Murray spontaneously agrees to bartend, pouring from whatever bottle comes to hand; crashing a party in Britain, Murray winds up in the kitchen doing the dishes.

The Globe and Mail – April 25, 2018 (2 of 3)



Laura Ross tells a story about a Murray sighting in The Bill Murray Stories.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Without much luck tracking down Murray himself, Avallone seeks out various critics, entertainment reporters and industry veterans and eventually discovers that these impromptu appearances, which bring much joy to those involved, seem to be a way for Murray to keep himself fresh by returning to his roots in improvisational comedy. What the doc doesn't examine is the way the game turns on Murray's celebrity: Nobody would let him get away with it if they didn't feel that this person they have never previously met is not somehow both well known to them and extremely desirable.

Two documentaries in the festival examine the psychology behind that adulation. *United We Fan* is a Canadian doc about the enthusiasts who campaign to save their favourite TV shows; *I Used to Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story* is an Australian one that follows four women of different ages as they consider their obsession with their favourite music groups. Both are highly sympathetic to their subjects, but there is something a bit sad about obsessive fandom: Who would spend a life fighting to save Cagney & Lacey when you could be saving the whales? Many of the people interviewed here, including Bjo and John Trimble, the couple who saved *Star Trek* when it was cancelled in 1968 after a mere two seasons, hint at tragedies or sorrows from which their campaigning is a great distraction.

Similarly, for all that *I Used to Be Normal* is highly respectful of the four fans it features, there is something missing from these lives devoted to bands such as the Backstreet Boys and One Direction, and some of the fans know it. In particular, Sadia, the 25-year-old Backstreet Boys fan and Ivy League grad, acknowledges she should be getting on with her own life. Is it any coincidence that she and the maniacal teenage One Direction fan, Elif, are both the children of overprotective immigrant parents struggling to define an American identity for their young selves?



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Jordan Goetz tells a story about Bill Murray crashing his house party in Avallone's documentary.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Perhaps the most useful analysis of the phenomenon comes from cultural anthropologist Susan Kresnicka in *United We Fan*, who observes that the fandom gathered around a television show represents a form of community gathered around a narrative, a social-media equivalent of the tribe sitting by the campfire telling stories. She understands the fans, sensing their passion comes from a real need for social connection.

While the connection between fans may be real – the Trimbles enjoy themselves at a *Star Trek* convention – the connection with the story and its stars may be merely fantastical. Backstreet Boys fan Sadia has enough self-knowledge to recognize the whole point of those blond gods she is worshipping is that they represent young men who are safely unattainable while Take That fan Dara is a bit surprised to discover, when she finally attends a concert, that Gary Barlow actually exists in three dimensions.

For a more critical look at that relationship, viewers may need to turn to *The American Meme*, a documentary that looks at the flip side of the equation as it examines the reality of several fantastical figures: controversial Internet celebrities, including Paris Hilton and Brittany Furlan. I haven't seen the film yet, but its goal is to examine where reality stops and performance begins in the lives of these figures whose fame and wealth is built on the adulation of millions of online followers.

In one clip, Hilton reveals how, in a world that has often betrayed her, she relies on her loyal fans for affection, who she refers to as the Little Hiltons. "I'm constantly traveling; 250 days a year I'm on a plane, in a different country. So it gets really lonely sometimes. I have been through so much and I don't really trust people. ... With my fans, I don't feel like that at all. ... I know they're not judging me, they're not trying to use me. They just genuinely love me."

Sounds a lot more fun being Bill Murray.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6 in Toronto

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-hot-docs-films-take-on-the-myth-and-mystery-of-celebrity/>

The Globe and Mail – April 25, 2018

Documentary The Heat explores gender barriers faced by female chefs

PUBLISHED APRIL 25, 2018



PLAY VIDEO 1:43

Filmmaker Maya Gallus says her documentary on the struggles female chefs face in the culinary world is timely, given the #MeToo movement. The Heat opens Toronto's Hot Docs festival on Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/video-documentary-the-heat-explores-gender-barriers-faced-by-female-chefs/>

The Globe and Mail – April 25, 2018 (1 of 3)

The Cleaners shines light on the Filipino workers who sift through Facebook's digital sewage

SIMON HOUP SENIOR MEDIA WRITER

PUBLISHED APRIL 25, 2018 UPDATED APRIL 25, 2018



The Cleaners will be at the Hot Docs festival next week.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Child pornography. Beheadings. Immolation videos. Every day, thousands of pieces of repugnant content are removed from Facebook by a secret army of censors. (After the van attack in Toronto on Monday, Facebook deactivated the account of the alleged assailant, who had posted a call for femicide.) But it also overreaches, deleting important examples of political dissent.

The disturbing new documentary *The Cleaners*, which will be at the Hot Docs festival next week, pulls back the curtain on Facebook's global content moderation, revealing the extraordinary psychological cost on cubicle workers in the Philippines paid a pittance to sift through the world's digital sewage. On Tuesday, we spoke with Hans Block, one of the film's co-directors.

You've got impressive timing: This week, Facebook succumbed to years of pressure and publicly released its internal guidelines on permissible content. How long was this film in the works?

There was a case in 2013 of a child sexual-abuse video that went online in the United States and was shared about 60,000 times on Facebook and "liked" thousands of times. We started asking, "Why is that happening, and is there something that's filtering the platform, curating the content we upload?"

You presumed the moderation was being done by artificial intelligence.

Yes, and the media scientist Sarah T. Roberts, who's in our movie, told us there are thousands of people in the developing world sitting in front of a screen eight to 10 hours a day, reviewing the content.

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At first, it seems like economic and cultural imperialism, paying people in Manila a couple of dollars an hour to do this numbing, awful work. But then it appears that there's a kind of reverse cultural imperialism: They're applying a Filipino standard across the world. You profile one moderator, a very religious woman who considers penises "sinful."

The Philippines is a very Catholic country. And their way of thinking, their mindsets, has some huge effects on how they decide about content.

Some of the moderators also don't seem comfortable with satire or strong political speech. So they remove satirical content that is critical of Donald Trump or Turkish President Recep Erdogan.

One of the reasons Facebook chose the Philippines for outsourcing – because they could go to Pakistan or India, which are also low-wage countries – is that the Philippines have a history of colonization. For 300 years, Spain occupied the country and the Americans [occupied it] for 100 years. Companies use this to promote outsourcing there. They say Filipinos share the same values as the Western world. Our experience was quite different. It's sort of a postcolonial continuation of history and all the decisions have an impact on our digital public sphere.



Moderators are each asked to review about 25,000 pieces of content every day.

COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Moderators are each asked to review about 25,000 pieces of content every day, which cover a huge range of issues.

It's so complicated to know all the cultural background of the content. Satire is just one example. It becomes much more difficult in regions where a crisis or a war is going on: How to distinguish between a terrorist group or a freedom-fighter group which is trying to help to bring freedom to the country?

Moderators often seem to miss content they should be taking down, such as hate speech that incites violence.

You can make mistakes on one side when you delete too much, but you can also make mistakes when you ignore too much. It can lead to a genocide in Myanmar, where thousands of Rohingya refugees have to flee the country because hate speech is amplified every day on these social-media platforms. This hate speech has real consequences.

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Someone in the film notes that we like to believe that technology is neutral, free of judgment, but it's clearly not – the moderators are only one of the more obviously capricious elements determining what we see.

When they started building those technologies, those tools, they were just interested in – as [Facebook's CEO] Mark Zuckerberg says – connecting people. Building a platform where people can spread the word, publish statements or content. They don't accept they have editorial decisions. But they have. Not just by content moderation, but the news feed, which is also curated. You see things Facebook thinks are interesting to you, and it hides other things. This is also an editorial decision.

While making the film, you were exposed to some of the awful content that the moderators deal with. What kind of an effect did that have on you?

It is tough, but the main difference is that I can talk about my feelings, I can take a break and talk to psychologists. These content moderators are not allowed to speak a word to their nearest friend or their families, because they signed non-disclosure agreements. This is the worst you can do if you're traumatized. This can lead to the worst consequences, which is also part of our movie: The suicide rate is extremely high.

The Cleaners will screen as part of the Big Ideas series on Monday, Apr. 30 at 6:30 p.m., followed by a Q&A with directors Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck, and the UCLA assistant professor of information studies, Sarah T. Roberts. It will screen again May 2 and 4. For more information: hotdocs.ca

This interview has been condensed and edited.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-the-cleaners-shines-light-on-the-filipino-workers-who-sift-through/>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Katja Fedulova — “Faith Hope Love”

BY Sophie Willard April 25, 2018

Katja Fedulova has been working since 2004 as a freelancer, cinematographer, and director for advertising, documentary, and feature films.

“Faith Hope Love” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 27.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

KF: My documentary is about three committed young Russian women, each of whom has a vision: to make their homeland better. Three women, three opposing and extreme attitudes.

Olga wishes for democracy in Russia, where she bravely fights against corruption. Natalia wants to put an end to mass abortions. Anastasia wants to protect Russia from the “external enemy,” and moves to the war zone in eastern Ukraine.

Even if I do not share the same view as most of the ideologies of my protagonists, these women fascinate me through their courage and their determination to fight in a country that is ruled by men.

As a girl, I too wanted to be a brave warrior. I wanted to protect my home from enemies. If necessary, I would even be ready to die for my country, like my grandmother, who fought in World War II. Her war stories have shaped me a lot. After 20 years of exile in Germany, I return to Russia to see if there any heroines like my grandmother, and if so, what are they fighting for in today’s Russia?

In the film, I accompany my protagonists for a year in their fight. Olga is running in Kursk in the regional elections. She is a deputy, acting as a clean democrat against much resistance and corrupt officials. But Olga’s mysterious assistant doubts her commitment. Natalia quarrels with morality in society; her human and social image is backward, an illusion. Anastasia fights as a war correspondent in the war in Ukraine. She defends Stalinism, and quotes a war comrade as saying, “You do not have to die for your homeland—you have to kill for it.”

W&H: What drew you to this story?

KF: I am an exiled Russian. Over 20 years ago I found my place to be here in Germany. When I left my motherland in the ‘90s, I escaped the chaotic circumstances of the Perestroika. I lived and worked in Berlin, I sharpened my filmmaker skills, and I am now driven back to Russia accompanied by mixed feelings: shame, confidence, and an unsatisfied need to be personally involved.

My desire is huge. What can I do for my homeland? Do I have a clearer and more objective view on Mother Russia than the people I left behind all those years ago? Can I help to bring these two worlds closer together?

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In “Faith Hope Love” I portray these—as they see themselves—“heroic” women. They represent the most diverse ideologies in the country that has been torn apart by the aftereffects of perestroika. I was disappointed to find that the Russian opposition is becoming weaker, and the distance to Europe is growing.

If the West was a role model until recently, it is now seen more as a Sodom and Gomorrah. The new Russia is very hard for dissidents. People with liberal, pro-Western political views are called Liberasts—this frightening term is a putting together of two words: “liberal,” and “pederast,” and has recently become very popular in the Russian mass media. It is used for the Russian creatives and freedom searchers.

In “Faith Hope Love” I draw a complex picture of the situation in Russia on the basis of simple examples. I had the hope that there were still people with an independent political view in Russia; I wanted to become a witness, a confidant, even a contributor.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

KF: I would like to give my viewers a different view of Russia and the situation there. Of course, the three visions presented do not just provide a glimpse into a possible Russian future but they make it clear to a Western audience why Russia is the way it is.

For several years there has been a conflict between Russia and the West. President Putin is being sharply criticized. In my film, among other things, I ask the question: is democracy possible in Russia? What must people do to break this authoritarian system? Do they even want that at all? Is my taxi driver in the right when he says, referring to mass corruption, “How can you fight what are the founding principles of this country?”

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

KF: I think the hardest part to me was not just being a questioning, irritated, searching author, but to meddle in, and engage in, uncomfortable, hard discussions, like those about the rape I experienced as a young woman. To describe this in front of the camera in an altercation requires overcoming a lot. But it was also necessary to use my own experience as a counter-argument to the contradictory ideologies of my protagonists.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

KF: I got a research scholarship from Robert Bosch Foundation, Literary Colloquium which funded my research, and secured my protagonists. My producers, Tondowski Films, then presented it to German TV—ZDF’s Das kleine Fernsehspiel, who then funded the film.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

KF: I am so happy that my documentary is in Hot Docs this year, and that I get to share my personal views of Russia to a North American, and international audience. I think it’s great that Hot Docs has selected 50 percent female filmmakers! Thanks, Hot Docs!

W&H: What’s the best advice you’ve received?

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KF: I was born, and grew up, in a socialist country, where most citizens were forced to adopt and represent one Utopian ideology. When I went to Germany, I learned from my film teachers to question everything, to form my own opinion, and to implement it in my films. This has helped me as a filmmaker to tackle political-social issues regardless of all kinds of propaganda, which are very present in Russia, and also in the West.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

KF: Fight for gender equality in our business!

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

KF: There are many female directors I really like. One of them is Eugenia Golovnya. I like her documentary films. It's difficult to explain why, because they are all so different, but the way she portrays people is unique!

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

KF: I think there is barely a woman, whether filmmaker or not, that has not been sexually harassed. I am also one of them. I also did not react when it happened. I did not resist. Not because of fear, but out of conviction that it must be normal.

Many of us have been socially educated from an early age to obey older people or high-ranking people. Our individual feelings were suppressed and disregarded. I am very happy that our children are quite different, [thanks in part to] such movements as #MeToo or #TimesUp. They are more confident and self-determined.

Hot docs révèle le nouveau visage de l'Europe **10 documentaires sur des changements qui secouent l'Europe**

Camille Simonet
25 avril 2018 à 14h00

Cette année, Hot Docs fête son 25e anniversaire en accentuant la diversité de ses cinéastes et des thèmes qu'ils et elles abordent. Le festival de documentaires lance notamment un programme intitulé *The changing face of Europe* (Le nouveau visage de l'Europe) en collaboration avec European Film Promotion (EFP).

Cette série de 10 documentaires porte sur les facteurs culturels, géographiques, économiques et politiques qui affectent l'Europe d'aujourd'hui.

«On est enchanté de faire ce partenariat avec Hot Docs. Cette série apporte une réflexion sur la nouvelle Europe, avec ces changements politiques et sociaux actuels», s'enthousiaste Sonja Heinen, directeur général de l'EFP. «Ça permet aussi de mettre un coup de projecteur sur la richesse et la diversité des documentaires européens.»

Documentaires inconnus

Car le but de cette initiative reste avant tout de présenter une sélection européenne de documentaires, avec des thématiques spéciales, à des spectateurs nord-américains non-habitués.

Toute une chance pour les réalisateurs sélectionnés! Leur création sera diffusée dans le plus grand festival de documentaire d'Amérique du Nord, mais pas que. Ils participeront également à des ateliers, des présentations de leur documentaire et pourront aussi rencontrer de potentiels distributeurs ou acheteurs.

Un réalisateur français

C'est le Français Clément Cogitore qui ouvrira le bal avec son documentaire *Bragino* les 27 et 28 avril. Connu pour son premier long-métrage *Ni le ciel ni la terre* qui avait été nommé pour le César du meilleur premier film en 2016, le réalisateur et artiste contemporain explore les confins de la taïga sibérienne avec cette nouvelle création.

Braguino, c'est le témoignage d'une vie en autarcie menée par deux familles, les Braguine et les Kiline qui ne s'entendent pas. Les deux ont leur propre territoire, délimité par une barrière.

Une troisième communauté s'est également installée sur une île du fleuve: les enfants, faisant fi de l'atmosphère pesante du conflit ancestral qui agite leurs parents.

Clément Cogitore donne ici un regard intéressant sur la contrée immense et mystérieuse qu'est la Sibérie. À deux pas de la fiction mais pourtant vrai, l'histoire des Braguine et des Kiline est fascinante et nous apprend beaucoup sur les «vieux croyants», ce groupe d'orthodoxes qui s'est séparé de l'Église orthodoxe de Russie, et notamment leur désir de retour à la nature.

Au final, c'est la volonté même de Hot Docs que de révéler des pans de vie inconnus et d'inconnus au grand public en regroupant des réalisateurs et des documentaires de qualité.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Elwira Niewiera — “The Prince and the Dybbuk”

BY Laura Berger April 25, 2018

Elwira Niewiera’s last feature documentary, “Domino Effect,” was shown at more than 50 festivals and received many awards. She is a member of the Polish Film Academy.

“The Prince and the Dybbuk” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 26. The film is co-directed by Piotr Rosolowski.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

EN: “The Prince and The Dybbuk” is a documentary about Michał Waszyński, who was born in 1904 into a poor Polish-Jewish family in Ukraine and died in Spain as Prince Michał Waszyński, Hollywood producer and exiled Polish aristocrat. He made more than 50 films, including American cinema hits with Sophia Loren and Audrey Hepburn.

Waszyński carefully erased various elements of his biography to be able to rewrite them in his own way. Putting his portrait together from these parts, we are embarking on a quest through a labyrinth of false [threads] and multiple versions of his life.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

EN: I was simply fascinated by this character and his life story. He was a man who wanted to be someone else and became one. It was not the first time a Jewish person working in the movie business created his own name and biography [using] lies and imagining stories. But rarely is anyone as successful in such masterly role-changing as Michał Waszyński. This phenomenal talent attracted my attention and interest.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

EN: The story of Waszyński has a very particular message. People are not simply born as “chameleons”—it is society that forces them to assume one role or another, to suppress or hide things that are unwanted and uncomfortable deep within their unconscious.

Waszyński made it into a game, turned it into an advantage, and it became his way of life. He was successful in outsmarting and duping the spirit of intolerance that spread across Europe. Yet it left him with a stigma that followed him his whole life. This intolerance has still not by any means been expelled from our world.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

EN: It was a big challenge to make a film about someone who constantly erased his own traces, changing names, religion, titles, or countries. At the beginning of the research it was not really clear if I would be able to meet people who still remembered Michał Waszyński. I even didn’t think that we could find his family in Israel or his second family in Italy.

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Waszyński died in 1965 in Madrid, so it's more than 50 years ago, and many of his friends and co-workers have also passed away. I did the research in several different countries [because of the life he led]—Poland, Ukraine, Italy, and Spain, and many people whom Waszyński was connected with now live in the U.S. or Israel.

In other words the research for this movie was a journey into the unknown. I definitely know much more about him now, but I still consider him a very mysterious man. Nobody knew him really well.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

EN: The film is a Polish-German co-production because we are Polish filmmakers who have spent many years living in Germany. The movie was quite expansive due to [accessing and using] archival material and we had to shoot and research in Ukraine, Poland, Italy, Spain, Israel, and the U.S.

The movie was funded by the Polish Film Institute, Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Polish National Film Archive, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Polish-German Film Fund, Eurimages, and [from German and Polish television].

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

EN: Hot Docs is really a great festival with a wonderful audience. I attended the festival with my previous film, "Domino Effect," in 2014. I hope that my new film will also have a good reception this year.

The fabulous life story of Michal Waszyński—who was remembered as an aristocrat, a liar, an eternally homeless Jew, and a homosexual married to an Italian countess—will be interesting for a Canadian audience.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

EN: There is no best and worst advice for me—all advice can be interesting and can lead to something positive!

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

EN: Make your work personal and striking.

Listen to other's opinions, but don't lose your own thread. Find and follow your inner voice—it will lead you to tell the right story.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

EN: I love the work of Susanne Bier, a Danish film director best known for her features "Brothers," "After the Wedding," and the Academy Award-winning "In a Better World." Her films revolve around the subject of fate and the cruel consequences that even the smallest mistakes can have. They show people in complex moral dilemmas and create a unique mix of helplessness and compassion in the audience.

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W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

EN: The male-dominated film business must end! I truly believe that the time has come for women's stories and perspectives to emerge more strongly in the film industry.

Hot Docs 2018 Interview: Mandi Gray, subject of *Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial*

Andrew Parker April 25, 2018 12:49 pm

Activist and sexual assault survivor Mandi Gray, the main subject of filmmaker Kelly Showker's documentary ***Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial*** (which premieres at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival next week), is both cautiously optimistic and worried about the future for people coming forward to face perpetrators, assailants, and rapists in a legal setting. During our phone conversation two weeks ago to talk about the film – which focuses on her own experiences – Gray speaks warmly and openly, sometimes with a sense of dark, self-aware humour and often with the weariness of someone who has gone through an unfathomable amount of hoop jumping to make sure her experiences were heard in a judicial setting. While she's grateful for the opportunities the court provided for her in a time of need, she's clearly still trying to process the entire affair, something Gray hopes that Showker's film can express in the hope of helping others in similar situations.

In early 2015 while working at York University and studying there as part of her PhD, Gray reported that she was raped and sexually assaulted by a colleague, acquaintance, and executive in her union. The consequences of her reporting were far reaching, and helpful resources from both her employer and the legal system were sometimes frustratingly out of reach. It was an ongoing ordeal that stretched over several years, with her case going to trial the following year in a Toronto courtroom (not far from where a similar case involving former radio personality Jian Gimeshi was unfolding at the same time) and Gray lodging a human rights complaint against her university. As Gray explains in our interview, her biggest reason for coming forward and engaging with the media attention her case attracted was the hopes that she could get back to school, feel safe, and complete her program. It was easier said and reported than done.

Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial is a deeply personal look at what Gray had to endure throughout the lengthy legal process. Working in tandem with director Showker, Gray documented nearly every step of the trial and fallout with hopes that the footage (and supplemental recreations of what happened inside the court) could serve as a primary resource for anyone who might find themselves in a similarly frustrating and often confounding situation. With most sexual assault charges never making their way to trial – being dismissed as “unfounded” by police during their investigation or never being investigated thanks to labyrinthine, sometimes unpredictable protocols that have to be followed to the absolute letter – Gray was lucky in the sense that she was able to have her day in court to confront her accuser, but getting to that point and the trial itself were a battle she'll never forget. *Slut or Nut* looks not only at Gray's case, but other similar legal quagmires, including perspectives from two women who remain unidentified, to display how difficult and taxing the judicial system can be for victims.

We talked with Gray in advance of the premiere of *Slut or Nut* to talk about the process of opening up to a film crew, her concurrent legal battles, what the province of Ontario needs

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to improve in terms of helping victims, and what she hopes people in similar situations will be able to take from the film.

I know from firsthand experience that it can be really trying to relive past traumas over and over again. Telling the story of what happened in situations like the one you went through can take a lot out of someone. What's it like for you to have someone there filming the trial process, and having to answer a lot of these same questions to a film crew on top of having to relive it all in the courtroom and the court of public opinion?

Mandi Gray: That's something I really haven't been asked before, but it's a really good question. I had been involved with another documentary previously, so I was sort of used to it, but I think the approach with Kelly was really open in terms of having me be involved a lot more with the filmmaking process. I think that provided me with a lot more agency, whereas talking about all of this and reliving it in a court of law was a place where I didn't have any. It kind of functioned as a way for me to speak back to what I had been experiencing in the courtroom. I actually found that doing video diaries for this film to be really therapeutic. When I had no one to talk to, I would just sit down in front of my computer and let it all out. I always knew that I wanted to do something with them, but I didn't anticipate sharing them in their raw form, ever. (laughs)

But more so than seeing the sharing my story over and over again as a negative, I feel like this was more of a reclamation of my story. Kelly took a really unique approach, I think, and based on what I know of documentary filmmaking, by allowing me to have some involvement in the filmmaking process. That wasn't therapeutic only for me, but also for Kelly, who also identifies as a survivor of sexual violence. Pretty much everyone on our team identifies as people who experienced some form of sexual violence. There was a real sense of community that made working with this group of folks so amazing. It was more empowering than anything else.

Considering that both yourself and Kelly have experienced sexual violence and knowing that people react to these traumas in different ways, was it important for you to have the sense of agency over your own story and to have someone like Kelly who was willing to let you tell it your way? It's a very timely and personal story, but I'm sure that it's nice to stay focused on what was true to your own experience as opposed to stretching it out to cover a number of other experiences that others in similar situations might have gone through.

Mandi Gray: Absolutely. I think that was always important to me even before this film had started. Being an activist and wanting to talk about these issues, I asked for the publication ban on my case to be removed because I wanted to be the one telling these things. I didn't want to be the kind of nameless and faceless figure that appears in some documentaries. I didn't want to be one of those people who for one reason or another – personal or legal – couldn't be identified. I think that's absolutely it, because I think everyone wants to control their own narrative. I didn't want to give someone my story and then be cut out of the process.

I originally came to filmmaker Min Sook Lee with the idea, and she was the person who put me in touch with Kelly, and we clicked instantly. We never intended to make a feature out of this. I really just wanted to someone to help document the entire process. I thought it would be important to let people see what happens, and even if we didn't end up making a

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film, I just wanted people to know that footage of what something like this is like was out there. We ended up making a film, but that was never the end goal for either of us when we started out filming and when we first met.

The film brings to light this system that victims of sexual abuse and violence have to delicately navigate just to be heard by anyone in court, and a lot of the process is based on sometimes obscure and unpredictable caveats that many victims are unfairly supposed to know before the abuse ever happens. What is it like when you're documenting this process and the hoops that many people have to jump through just to get their case before the courts? How hard is it to make people who haven't gone through this process understand it?

Mandi Gray: I think showing how difficult this system is to navigate was always our intention. For example, one of the Jane Does that we have in the film didn't even want to go to court for her case, but rather she just wanted some semblance of support from her university, and even that was inaccessible. At the very bare minimum, if even reaching out for someone to talk to becomes inaccessible, that's something that this film needs to talk about. In many cases, these problems extend far beyond the courtroom and start well before that point. There are waiting lists, people who'll never call you back, instances where you'll be the last to know something vital about your case. It can feel like nobody cares about you at times.

What we really wanted to highlight was that reporting something and seeking help might seem as easy as making a phone call, but it's not that simple. You're not immediately believed and you're not immediately in. This isn't just about people who have experienced sexual violence, either. It extends to all kinds of other traumas and issues that can arise from it. We want people to make educated decisions in terms of figuring out what to do next, but we also want to reach support people who might be encouraging people to report things like this who might not realize how difficult this process could be for some people. Reporting something like this entails a lot, and it takes up a lot of your mental energy, decision making processes, and your time to follow through on it, and at any time after you make that initial report, everything can be taken away from you. I hope it's effective and a call to action to help reform some of these systems that are in place to help victims speak and be heard. There has been some movement because there's a larger dialogue happening at the moment, but it's not a fast change that's happening. We're hoping this film can push that a little more, and that this film can be a resource more than anything.

You mention in the film that whenever your case was written about, you were always mentioned as the victim, but the person who sexually assaulted you was never identified even after the publication ban was lifted. You always wanted to have the name of your assailant out in the open, despite it hardly ever being used by journalists covering the trial. We do, however, live in a culture where we tend to never want to give evil a name or give credence to it by putting a face to the criminal act. How did you get to the point where you knew you wanted his name public, and I was wondering how you feel about those victims of similar crimes who might not want their attackers, rapists, and assaulters identified?

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Mandi Gray: What you're saying is absolutely right, and it's definitely a part of a larger conversation that's important for people to understand and make clear. From the assault to the beginning of the trial, this was never really about him. Of course, what he did to me had a huge impact, but it's so much bigger than his actions. It was a series of things that really led to a breaking point for me on a personal level. In the beginning, I didn't really mind all that much that he hadn't been named and that he hadn't gone to trial. He was charged, but he wasn't tried yet, and I understood that and how it worked. But what happened was at a certain point *The Toronto Star* published a piece about it that had in the headline "The Mandi Gray Trial." You see something like that, and all of a sudden it immediately looks to an outsider like I was the person who was on trial. You see these things you wonder how they come up with the language for something like that. He's the one charged. He's the one on trial. I am a victim and a witness.

It became frustrating at that point, and I tried to never get caught up in it too much because in the grand scheme of things when we talk about these larger issues, he's completely irrelevant. But at the same time, we can't focus everything solely on me. These actions were done to me, and they didn't just happen.

But in terms of your question about people who don't want the name of the perpetrator to be named, I completely understand where they're coming from. There's still definitely a stigma that exists surrounding sexual violence, and there are a lot of consequences that come when a perpetrator is named, especially if that perpetrator is someone in a position of power. We see how cases like that play out time and time again in the media. I think that we also know that publication bans in all sexual assault cases means that the name, age, sex, and identity of the victim can't be published, but what ends up happening is that it also protects the perpetrator's name.

I don't have a definitive answer for that question. Sexual assault is something that impacts people in so many different ways and they can be compounded by a variety of different factors. Not only could the perpetrator be someone in a position of power, but the victim could be someone from a marginalized background and discriminatory attitudes could arise. Ultimately, it's not for me to say what the proper course of action is or what's ideal, but for me I thought that I did what was appropriate given my own personal set of circumstances. It was frustrating that the focus in the media was solely focused on my conduct and my actions, and his on that night were either being excused or ignored.

It has to be insulting and strange when people try to make you out to be someone who wanted to be quote-unquote "the face of sexual assault," because I don't think anyone would ever wake up in the morning and suddenly want that put upon themselves. I think that's one of the reasons why so many people involved in cases like this want to remain as Jane Doe or don't want to speak publically at all. When a project like this film puts you in contact with a lot of people in this position, did that give you a bit more energy to be someone who was out there and speaking publically about what happened to you?

Mandi Gray: I think it definitely did. As you know, we have two people in the film that cannot be identified: one for legal reasons and one for personal consequences that she

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would face if someone knew her identity. We really wanted to highlight that. While the film shows me speaking out and shows the consequences of doing so, I also acknowledge and understand what an incredible privilege it is to be in that kind of position. Of course, it hasn't always been amazing as an overall experience, but alternately I can't imagine having to live my life without being open and being able to talk about my experience. It's definitely a privilege, though.

It encouraged me to keep going because so many people have reached out to me to tell me that seeing just the trailer for the film helped them. There's a line in the trailer and the film that has already resonated with a lot of experiences victims have had, which is "If you had the power to speak out against institutions, why couldn't you speak out and tell the rapist to stop it?" I think among a lot of folks that have become activists around this issue, that's a common mentality to run into. The feedback from the community and those who can't be publically transparent about their situations has been really heartening.

The film also shows that there are a lot of people out there within the legal and social support systems that are trying to do good, but their hands are tied for any number of reasons from legal caveats to lack of funding and resources, and that's a common theme that runs through many of the cases touched on here. Looking back on your experiences now, what do you think needs to change in terms of eliminating a lot of the barriers victims face when trying to access legal or support services?

Mandi Gray: In an ideal world, there's so much we could be doing better. When I was going through my sexual assault trial, I was fortunate enough to be a part of a pilot project aimed at survivors that was created by the government of Ontario, but like I said, it was a pilot project, and that's something that requires a firm source of funding if it were to continue in the future.

In the film, we also make it known that accusers need to have access to firm and stable legal advice. I spoke with a number of lawyers, and the legal team I had ended up being life changing for me because they were always able to give me concrete answers on what to expect, what was happening, and generally performing all of the communicative tasks that I was unable to do. Crown attorneys are very busy, but if one of their colleagues were to contact them instead of a victim doing so, they're more likely to call back in a timely fashion.

The province of Ontario has a program where victims of sexual assault are provided with four hours of legal advice, free of charge. I'm really advocating for the forwarding of that program because having that access to knowledgeable, professional legal advice was one of the things I was most grateful for throughout my experience.

And having counselling is also important. Under O.H.I.P., after you're sexually assaulted you are allotted twenty sessions with a counsellor, which likely won't even get victims to the trial portion of what they're going through. Often a trial can occur up to a year after charges are filed. In my case, I was in the courts for almost two and a half years, so most of the therapy I needed was provided by the fact that I was employed at a unionized workplace with great benefits. I was able to cover the cost, but for most people it's inaccessible and not even enough to last through the trial. Legal expertise is certainly mentally important, but

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counselling can help with so many other matters tangential to the case, like talking to loved ones, communicating with employers, and considerations about one's own well being that often go overlooked.

We've talked a lot about the trial and navigating the legal system, and that's a large focus of the film, but there's also a parallel thread about dealing with York University, where you were studying and where you were employed. The incident tied things together, but these are two vastly different battles that you were fighting with differently structured institutions. From your experience, what made your interactions with the university different?

Mandi Gray: To be completely honest, I expected the police and legal system to be cold and somewhat distant going into all of this. I was always prepared for that just because of the nature of what they have to do and the procedure that has to be followed. I wasn't prepared for the university to be just as dismissive, especially when there had been a call for a long time to respond to cases of sexual assault. There are posters all over the university that point you in the direction of resources in case you experience sexual assault. Then if you tried to access these resources, none of them are that effective and some don't even really exist in practice.

There's a term in psychology called "institutional betrayal," and it's a fascinating, sometimes soul crushing experience when this institution that you trust and you think has your best interests at heart and wants to keep you safe turns out to not be true. That betrayal is incomparable to anything else. Again, I expected the police and legal system to act the way that they did because I worked in the legal system a bit during school, and I was prepared for the reactions and process to some degree. I was used to dealing with lawyers and the police through my previous work experience. I was used to those situations to be cold and impersonal. I wasn't prepared for the university to react that way. In many ways, that was a lot harder because I might have expected more from them. When a university says they have a commitment to social justice and you find out they might not, it really hits hard when you learn where that institution's priorities lay.

Your trial happened almost at the start of a cycle of victims coming publically forward in the media with their stories. In hindsight and looking back on it in the culture we've been living in for the past year, how do you feel about how the conversation around the rights of sexual assault victims has been evolving?

Mandi Gray: It's interesting that you bring that up because to add a bit more context, when I was sexually assaulted, it was two months after Jian Gimeshi had been charged. We had to cut it from the film both for financial reasons in terms of getting to use footage to draw parallels, but also because it would lead to a much larger film. I remembered seeing Lucy DeCoutere in the media, and I thought she was amazing. She was out there and it was so powerful for me.

But my trial started at the same time as the Gimeshi trial in the same exact courthouse. That was going to be too complex to highlight in the film and stray somewhat from what we wanted to do, but it was always fascinating to watch how this celebrity trial was being

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treated, and my trial wasn't paid attention to until Gomeshi was acquitted, and suddenly the media came over to where my trial was taking place to see what was going on over there.

It took such a weird turn, and I worried about it for a long time. When I reported to the police, we were at the height of people showing up outside the courthouse with people holding signs saying "believe survivors," "I stand with Lucy," "Been raped, never reported," and things like that. I thought there wasn't a better social and political moment in terms of bringing these things to light, but at the same time, I was exhausted by my own experience and by what was being highlighted in the media. It was disappointing because I was having the exact opposite experience of what was being talked about in the media.

Last year, I was asked by NOW Magazine to write about what my feelings were on the direction of the #MeToo movement, and I think that worry is still there. People are encouraged to report, but the structural changes needed to make people feel comfortable reporting aren't there yet. It's not going to be a fun or uplifting experience ahead. Funding for programs and legal advice isn't where it needs to be. The courts are still adamant that there's no bias towards sexual assault survivors, but I'm worried that these biases still exist. I think the film is coming out at a good time not because it's coming at the height of the #MeToo movement, but because it can be a practical resource that more people can access

I get messaged every day with questions like, "Should I report?," "Should I out my abuser?," "Should I tell my workplace?," and I don't have the answers to everyone's questions, but I also don't think that most resources out there are in a place to provide all of the appropriate answers. I do feel like there's a shift taking place, but I ultimately think people need to ask themselves first and foremost what their ultimate objective is.

For me, my objective was always to be able to return to campus and to work and to feel safe. I was able to do that, but unfortunately it shouldn't be that hard to accomplish. Some people have told me that it might have been better if I had reported now instead of in 2015, and I honestly don't believe that's true at all. I don't ever regret it, though. Most people don't get a chance to tell their perpetrator what they did to them. I was on the witness stand for four days testifying over and over again with details while he was there. Not a lot of people get that opportunity, so if we want to look at the bright side, at least I got that, and I got to go back to campus. You have to look for that bright side when you report something like this and to make educated decisions about what's best for them and their situation.

Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial screens at Hot Docs on:

Wednesday, May 2, 2018 – 9:00 pm – Isabel Bader Theatre

Thursday, May 3, 2018 – 8:45 pm – Scotiabank Theatre (RUSH, Intro and Q&A will also be provided in ASL)

Friday, May 4, 2018 – 6:45 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox (RUSH, Closed Captioning)

<https://www.thegate.ca/film/033437/hot-docs-2018-interview-mandi-gray-subject-of-slut-or-nut-the-diary-of-a-rape-trial/>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Shasha Nakhai — “Take Light”

BY Laura Berger April 25, 2018

Shasha Nakhai is a filmmaker based out of Toronto with Compy Films and Storyline Entertainment. Her award-winning films have screened at festivals and aired on TV worldwide. Her last film with partner Rich Williamson, “Frame 394,” was shortlisted for the 2017 Academy Award for Best Documentary Short and was nominated for two Canadian Screen Awards.

“Take Light” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 27.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

SN: “Take Light” centers on the tangled web of Nigeria’s energy crisis through a series of characters connected by the grid.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

SN: I grew up in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, where the majority of filming takes place. Much of my life there was framed by a lack of consistent power supply, even as privileged as I was. This was an issue that affected everyone—rich or poor.

I started gaining some perspective on the situation when I moved to Canada for boarding school at the age of 15. Moving between Canada and Nigeria made me realize how little people here knew about life in Nigeria, and I saw a real lack of these kinds of stories in North American media.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

SN: I hope people are inspired by the resilience of the characters in the film, and begin to develop more complex ideas about Nigeria and Nigerians that push beyond two-dimensional stereotypes.

I also hope people will think about where their energy comes from and realize the urgency in shifting to more green and just economies globally.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

SN: Filming in Nigeria is generally very challenging. Dealing with bureaucracy was the greatest challenge we faced. We spent three months on location, but a huge percentage of that time was spent laying groundwork, gaining trust, dealing with multi-layered approval processes, and spending a hell of a lot of time in waiting rooms. This was a real test in patience and stamina.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

SN: The producer of this film, Ed Barreveld, has been a long-time mentor of mine, so I was thrilled when he expressed interest in producing this film. Canada’s documentary Channel came on board

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first to commission the film, and the rest of the funding and support comes from Telefilm Canada, the Ontario Media Development Corporation, the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund, the Rogers Telefund, and tax credits.

It was pitched at Hot Docs Deal Maker, SunnySide of the Doc, and the Documentary Organization of Canada's Breakthrough Program.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

SN: I started volunteering at Hot Docs in 2008 when I was in university, and every year it is a highlight on the calendar. It means a lot to me to show it in my hometown and to watch it with all the people who worked on and supported it.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

SN: As my producer Ed likes to say, "The same people you meet on the way up are the same people you meet on the way down." I repeat this mantra to myself every now and then just to check myself and remind myself to stay grounded on this journey, and to always strive to treat everyone with kindness regardless of who they are.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

SN: Thankfully my experiences with the documentary film industry in Canada have been good so far, especially when compared to a lot of people in fiction or in Hollywood. I have definitely dealt with my fair share of issues, but I have also been lucky enough to be able to work with supportive and sensitive men in my career, and alongside powerful yet graceful and kind women.

Find your people and do everything you can to stick together.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

SN: This question is a bit hard to answer so I'll just name one I actually worked on. I'd say one of my favorite woman-directed films is Rama Rau's "League of Exotique Dancers" because I learned a lot from working under Rama and she is one of my real, tangible role models in my industry. The film profiles aging legends of burlesque and is a celebration of womanhood. You feel powerful after watching it and its nuanced approach will have you laughing and crying and wanting to share the experience with other women.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

SN: This makes me feel really empowered, encouraged, and glad that we are banding together to end unacceptable behavior and encourage more diverse voices—and not just in terms of gender. It's going to take some time to change these cultures fully but we are on the right track and need to hold strong on course. <https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-shasha-nakhai-take-light-a67b835875cb/?gi=f55f830e125d>

Women chefs step up to the plate in Hot Docs opener **The Heat**

Director Maya Gallus's timely film shows how gifted women are transforming kitchen culture and grappling with its hierarchies and misogyny

BY SUSAN G. COLE

APRIL 25, 2018



Samuel Engelking

Maya Gallus, here at the Gladstone, says arranging an interview with one particular chef was like trying to meet the Pope.

THE HEAT: A KITCHEN R(E)VOLUTION (Maya Gallus, Canada). 75 minutes. April 26, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; April 28, 1:15 pm, TIFF 1; May 6, 3:30 pm, Isabel Bader. hotdocs.ca.

Of course there are snacks, a spread of cheeses, veggies and cookies on Maya Gallus's coffee table, ready for me to tuck into as we talk. They are artfully arrayed, though not as spectacularly as the food in her movie *The Heat*, set to open this year's Hot Docs festival on April 26.

Via interviews with expert chefs and expertly plunking her team into their kitchens, Gallus probes the question of whether women helming restaurants can – or even want to – **transform kitchen culture**, its hierarchies and its misogyny. And she makes sure that the dishes these

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gifted women create look gorgeous on the screen.

Gallus was inspired not only by her own love of food (this is her second film on the subject after 2010's *Dish*, about female servers), but by the extent to which female culinary wizards are more or less invisible, not only throughout history but in the present – magazine covers, including *NOW*'s, have featured all-male group shots of chefs.

Gallus travelled the world to find her subjects, including Michelin-starred Anne-Sophie Pic in Valence, France, Angela Hartnett (Murano) in London, UK, the great Anita Lo of Annisa in New York City, which she closed during the shooting of the film, and Suzanne Barr, operator of the now-shuttered Saturday Dinette here in Leslieville.

She knew they'd be smart and committed, but Gallus was surprised by how quiet their kitchens were.

"I'll admit it made me nervous," she says speaking easily – we've known each other for years. "At first I thought, 'Oh my God, it's so quiet in here. There's no drama.' These women are so accomplished and so focused on their work and it was like watching an artist work or a painter paint. And that can be pretty boring."

But her movie is not boring, mainly because Gallus and her team are so skilled at making the most of their limited budget. They manage to stay out of the way – crucial in the bowels of a restaurant – yet catch enlightening moments: Chumley's chef Victoria Blamey warns a sous chef to watch his tone; a cook, when criticized by another boss, is told by a long-time employee, "Just say, 'Yes, chef'"; Pic agonizes over how to plate a beautiful dish using chef's tweezers.

"These are powerful women and they do take up their space," Gallus allows. "They're not quiet as in *meek*. They're strong, assertive and very clear about what has to be done and when and why, but they're not taking on a caricature of Gordon Ramsay."

In fact, Hartnett had first-hand experience with the famously truculent Ramsay, survived the experience and remains his friend.

"She trained under Ramsay and, on her own, she tried yelling," Gallus says, "but realized, 'It doesn't work for me. It's too stressful, it makes everybody stressed and it's not very efficient.'"

The chefs weren't easy to wrangle. Gallus compares the exercise to herding cats.

“I thought it would be easy in the sense that they’re in their fucking restaurants – how hard could it be? But they’re working all the time so they’re not on email or their phones. Getting Pic was like trying to arrange an interview with the Pope.”

Now on hiatus from the industry and living in Florida, Suzanne Barr, who will attend the festival, says Gallus’s perseverance was epic.

“I thank her for her patience,” raves Barr on the phone, “for texting me and calling me and knowing how demanding the industry is; how when someone calls you and you’ve just worked a full shift and then you’re back up the next morning... I didn’t get back to her. But she was so considerate of me and my time.”



Former Saturday Dinette and Gladstone Hotel chef Suzanne Barr says says Gallus’s perseverance was epic.

After Saturday Dinette, Barr worked at the Gladstone, reinventing the resto there, and is currently developing other projects. She says Gallus is a very skilled interviewer, gently insistent, shooting long, thorough conversations that get strong results.

“We had moments when she found it difficult to get what she wanted,” Barr allows, “but she kept pushing me and asking the question, finding a way for me to slow down, gather my thoughts and be able to speak the true honesty of my point.”

Because she’s sensitive to the financial demands of operating a restaurant, Gallus made sure to talk to Charlotte Langley, who runs a private pop-up.

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“Charlotte is an example of how women just do it,” says Gallus. “I wanted to show that you don’t have to have brick and mortar. And I loved that she was doing pop-ups, which is a trend. There are issues with landlords, rents are crazy and running a resto is a crazy dream.”

Not all the chefs were warm and toasty. Blamey is tough, claiming you can’t assume women will be sweeter and nice. Like many chefs, Amanda Cohen of upscale NYC vegetarian spot Dirt Candy says the intense hierarchy of the kitchen brigade can be useful. And Langley says she loved to upend the sexist paradigm and sexualize her young male workers.

Gallus, who’s been making women-centred films for years, including docs on writers Elizabeth Smart and Mazo de la Roche and a film focusing on female erotica, is just fine with that.

“I’m interested in telling women’s stories and in the complexity of women, not the sanitized vision of women as perfect. That’s not at all interesting, and it’s also untrue.”

For over 15 years, Gallus made movies with her partner in life, Justine Pimlott, through Red Queen Productions – films like *Girl Inside*, a groundbreaking doc about a trans woman’s journey, and *Derby Crazy Love*, an exhilarating inside look into the world of roller derby.

Pimlott has taken a position with the National Film Board, so this is the first movie Gallus has made on her own since 2003. It still has all the hallmarks of a Red Queen film.

“I always feel the urgency to say something, but what we’ve always tried to do at Red Queen is say something but trick people by making an entertaining film. Maybe they’ll learn something in the process but not feel hit over the head with it.”

Following Hot Docs, The Heat will open theatrically at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on May 11 and air on TVO in the fall.

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/features/hot-docs-2018-maya-gallus-the-heat/>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Jessica Leski — “I Used to Be Normal”

BY Laura Berger April 25, 2018

Jessica Leski wrote, directed, and co-edited her first full-length documentary, “The Ball.” The film won a Hugo Television Award at the Chicago International Film Festival. Leski’s short films have screened at festivals internationally, and she has won major awards at a number of Australian film festivals.

“I Used to Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 26.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

JL: “I Used to Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story” is a feature documentary that follows four boyband fans aged between 16 to 64 from New York, Sydney, San Francisco, and Melbourne. Even though their ages and hometowns may vary, they’ve all had their lives unexpectedly shaped by their love of a boyband—whether it be One Direction, Take That, the Backstreet Boys, or The Beatles.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

JL: I fell in love with a boyband for the very first time at the age of 31. It was one of the most confusing, surprising, and exciting experiences I’d had up to that point. At the time they called it “The One Direction Infection,” and it hit me hard. I had never been a fan of a boyband before, despite having been a teenager at the height of the Backstreet Boys and *NSYNC glory years.

Growing up, my opinions tended toward the uncharitable: I thought boybands were cheesy, and that their fans were hopelessly unsophisticated. I remember thinking to myself the first time I heard a One Direction song on the radio, “Do they think we’re idiots? They just repeated the same chorus 10 times over!” But by the end of that same song I’d somehow been hooked, and suddenly wanted to know everything about them.

I knew I was being manipulated by catchy lyrics and a savvy marketing machine, and yet somehow I’d become both willing and complicit. I immediately felt an urge to know more about this phenomenon, and was of course eager to meet other fans.

I decided to turn this obsession into my job, and started researching both boybands and their fans for this film.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

JL: I would love for the film to help audiences re-connect with their teenage selves. People are so quick to mock and judge teenagers, when often the things teens are navigating are surprising and complex and deserving of respect.

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More broadly I would like to think that the film might cause people to re-think their words and actions before they judge someone for loving a genre of music or film, or any other niche interest that they themselves don't understand or cherish.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

JL: Convincing people that a film about boyband fans was important and timely, and not just a disposable fluff piece. This factor of course also added to the challenge of raising the funds needed to make the film a reality.

In the end it took us five years, during which time we kept having to stop and take on other jobs. It was a complex and exhausting balancing act.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

JL: For the first two years my producer Rita Walsh and I funded production ourselves and made use of the couches and spare rooms of family and friends as we traveled to the different cities featured in the film. We then spent a lot of time talking to individuals whom we hoped might want to support the film, and through that process we were able to bring on some donor support via the Documentary Australia Foundation.

In late 2015 we ran a successful Kickstarter campaign to fund our first round of editing.

Finally, once we had a rough assembly, we applied to our local agencies for funding—and were thrilled when Screen Australia and Film Victoria signed on to fund the film's post production.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

JL: For much of the five years it took to make this film, it was just Rita and I alone. Yes, we had fun bursts of activity where we were able to work with an amazing crew and meet and interview so many wonderful and interesting people and build a great community of online supporters, but for so much of the journey it was just the two of us, often working separately on our respective tasks. So to be at this point now, finally able to share the film with audiences—that's borderline cathartic.

We're eager to see how audiences in Toronto will react, and it is my hope that the boyband fans among them will see elements of their own experiences reflected on screen. We're also thrilled that three out of the four women featured in the film will be able to join us at Hot Docs for the premiere.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

JL: Best advice: Turn your hobby into your job!

Worst advice: That you can teach yourself new editing software while in the middle of editing a documentary with upwards of 100 hours of footage.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

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JL: You have to be your own cheerleader. Given that you won't get the same opportunities as male directors, you have to develop a deep faith in yourself and your projects if you want to stand a chance of making people stop and pay attention.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

JL: I love Miranda July's "Me and You and Everyone We Know." I love filmmakers who capture and elevate those brief, seemingly inconsequential moments that, when taken together, add up to the meaning of our lives. It's gentle and funny and heartbreaking. I try to live my life in that way too, noticing and reflecting on all the small moments and interactions that make up the day.

I also love Agnès Varda's "The Gleaners and I." It's eye-opening, meditative, unique. I stumbled upon this film very early on in my filmmaking journey, and it was so inspiring to see just how tiny her team was, as it was often just Varda herself. This film represented her first experience using a digital camera and she seems to delight in being able to do so much of the filmmaking herself. As a documentary filmmaker, it's extremely important to have a wide range of skills and to not rely on big budgets or crews or fancy equipment to tell your story.

Also, both these women are so super cool.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

JL: I think that the sheer volume of #MeToo and #TimesUp stories that have been shared across social media is truly shocking. Clearly it's crucial that these stories be listened to and trusted. It seems that everyone has a story and this movement has been a catalyst for many overdue discussions and confessions between my friends and colleagues in the industry. It's also instigated discussions about the music industry, and the sometimes problematic nature of the young men who make up the boybands. They're often afforded a lot of money and power, and we need to make sure that they are still held to proper standards of behavior.

In any case, I think it's an exciting time to be a woman in the creative industries. Though it is taking time, we are empowering ourselves to stand up to inappropriate behavior, to call out abusers and bullies, to rally together, and to share our stories, so that it becomes an industry of equality and respect.

In a small way I hope our film can contribute to the discussion about giving voice to women's experiences.

Hot Docs review: 1999

Samara Grace Chadwick's doc about a rash of suicides in her old school is a powerful meditation on trauma and resilience

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 25, 2018

6:02 PM



1999 (Samara Grace Chadwick, Canada/Switzerland). 90 minutes. Rating: NNNN

In 1999, the student body of École Mathieu-Martin – a small French-language school just outside Moncton, New Brunswick – was rocked by an inexplicable rash of suicides. **Samara Grace Chadwick** was a student there; 16 years later, she went back home to make a movie about the period.

Chadwick's 1999 doesn't try to explain the deaths as much as understand what it was like for the kids who lived through the tragic period. It's an evocative, very personal documentary that finds Chadwick talking to her friends and trying to feel her way through a collective memory that none of them can fully grasp.

Interweaving footage of the school as it is today and archival clips of kids goofing around for a video camera, Chadwick and editor **Terra Jean Long** have built a meditation on trauma and resilience.

It's unlike anything I've seen this year.

April 28, 3:15 pm, TIFF 3; April 29, 8:30 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 4, 4 pm, TIFF 3
<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-1999/>

Hot Docs review: Letter From Masanjia

Director Leon Lee fumbles telling this important story of human rights abuses in China

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 25, 2018

5:48 PMAddThis Sharing But



LETTER FROM MASANJIA (Leon Lee, Canada). 76 minutes. Rating: NN

You may have heard the story of an Oregon woman who opened up a cheap Halloween decoration to find a letter from a prisoner in a Chinese labour camp, begging for help. It's not an urban legend; the author was **Sun Yi**, a practitioner of Falun Dafa who risked his life to get his message out to the world.

Sun's story is a powerful indictment of human rights abuses in China, but director **Leon Lee** fumbles the telling at almost every turn. In terms of execution, Letter From Masanjia is a mess of missed opportunities, choppy editing and questionable aesthetic decisions, like the re-creation of Sun's torture in the labour camp through black-and-white animated sequences.

I suspect Lee – who's made a number of films about China's harsh treatment of its citizens – believes that the story he's telling is powerful enough to overcome any flaws in his presentation. Sadly, that isn't the case.

April 27, 8:15 pm, TIFF 3; April 29, 2:15 pm, TIFF 4; May 4, 4 pm, Scotiabank 13

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-letter-from-masanjia/>

Hot Docs review: Slut Or Nut: Diary Of A Rape Trial

Documentary about Mandi Gray's rape trial should be required watching for all in the #MeToo era

BY MICHELLE DA SILVA

APRIL 25, 2018

4:01 PM



SLUT OR NUT: DIARY OF A RAPE TRIAL (Kelly Showker, Canada). 70 min. Rating: NNN

Kelly Showker's documentary recounts **Mandi Gray's** taxing ordeal of trying to hold the police force, university administration and legal system that refused to take her seriously. Mustafa Ururyar was found guilty of sexual assault in 2016. The conviction was recently overturned.

Gray is engaging and dynamic on camera – even sarcastic at times, which helps break the tension during especially tense moments.

But too many elements, including Hollywood-style court reenactments, affirmation art by Toronto's **Hana Shafi** and narration by **Jane Doe** as an animated fox, can at times feel overly embellished.

Still, Slut Or Nut shines an important light on Canada's inadequate support systems for survivors and should be required watching for all in the #MeToo era.

May 2, 9 pm, Isabel Bader; May 3, 8:45 pm, Scotiabank 7; May 4, 6:45 pm, TIFF 3

Correction An earlier version of this story may have mistakenly left the impression that Mustafa Ururyar was found guilty of rape or sexual assault. Ururyar was convicted of sexual assault in 2016. His conviction was later overturned, and all charges withdrawn, with Ururyar agreeing to sign a peace bond.

Scene Creek – April 25, 2018

Hot Docs Review: The Accountant of Auschwitz

A deeply thought provoking trial serves as the backdrop to this moving tribute to Holocaust survivors.

MATT HOFFMAN
APRIL 25, 2018

In 2014, at 93-years-old, Oskar Gröning was charged as an accessory for 300,000 murders at the Auschwitz concentration camp. In 2015, director Matthew Shoychet traveled with a group of Auschwitz survivors to Lüneberg, Germany where they would testify against Gröning. Shoychet offers a full perspective of the much publicized trial with interviews spanning from Lüneberg locals to member of O.J. Simpson's defense team Alan Dershowitz. Through these interviews, *The Accountant of Auschwitz* questions the ethics of holding this one man legally responsible for 300,000 deaths nearly seventy-five years after the fact.

The Accountant of Auschwitz serves as a moving examination at the post-war lives of Holocaust survivors. Subject Bill Glied (pictured above) – a former Toronto resident who passed away early this year – questions both his role in the trial and his decision revisit the horrors of his youth. On the other side of the spectrum is another survivor, who chooses to forgive and hug Gröning in the one of the film's most challenging and thought provoking moments.

Shoychet has crafted a film that not only functions as a historical document but also examines the very nature of trauma and post-Holocaust identities. It's deeply wrought emotional and ethical qualms elevate the material from the singular event, making the film an essential piece on Jewish identities and deaths.

<http://scenecreek.com/hot-docs-review-accountant-auschwitz/>

Hot Docs review: Witkin & Witkin

Art enthusiasts will love this doc about artistic identical twins Joel-Peter and Jerome Witkin, whose life-long estrangement gives the doc a satisfying through line

BY RADHEYAN SIMONPILLAI

APRIL 25, 2018

1:25 PM



WITKIN & WITKIN (Trisha Ziff, Mexico). 93 minutes. Rating: NNN

You may already be familiar with **Joel-Peter Witkin**. The photographer's provocative work ranges from the elegantly grotesque, like a dismembered head used as a flowerpot, to stately images where marginalized bodies are either empowered or exploited depending on who you ask.

As **Trisha Ziff**'s doc points out, his influence hovers over Nine Inch Nails and Alexander McQueen. The film is equally interested in Joel's lesser-known identical twin, **Jerome**, an equally fascinating painter and arts professor.

Their individual processes and influences is great fodder for art enthusiasts, but the brothers' peculiar and purposeful life-long estrangement is what gives the doc (and the Witkin & Witkin exhibit from which it extends) a through line. I doubt the distinctions and commonalities between them are enough to fill an art-school essay.

May 1, 6:15 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 3, 1:15 pm, Isabel Bader; May 5, 10:30 am, TIFF 3

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-witkin-and-witkin/>

Hot Docs review: Behind The Curve

Daniel J. Clark's documentary is a remarkably clear-eyed look at the Flat Earth Movement

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 25, 2018

1:21 PM



BEHIND THE CURVE (Daniel J. Clark, U.S.). 96 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Unlike a few other films about people who hold questionable beliefs, *Behind The Curve* is a remarkably clear-eyed look at the Flat Earth movement, in which people around the globe (but mostly in America) labour to convince the rest of us that our planet is flat – more like a terrarium, really – but sinister forces have gone to elaborate lengths to keep it quiet.

It's a literal conspiracy theory, and one spun out over and over again by the likes of **Mark Sargent** and **Patricia Steere**, who've become superstars in the Flat Earth YouTube community over the last few years. They don't offer real answers, just innuendo and suspicion – Steere loves referring to "The Powers That Should Not Be" – but that's what keeps people coming back, of course.

Documentarian **Daniel J. Clark** interviews them, and a few other believers, and lets them tell their version of reality – but he also speaks to astrophysicists and psychologists who efficiently debunk their beliefs and explain how people might have come to hold them. (The Dunning-Kruger effect, in which people convince themselves they know everything about something while actually knowing very little, is brought up fairly early on, along with confirmation bias,

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which keeps people focused on evidence that supports their existing beliefs rather than evidence that challenges them.)

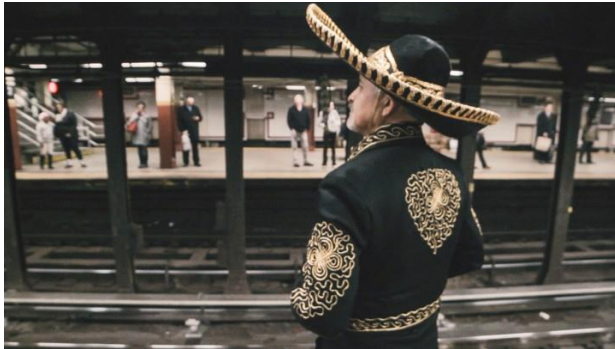
While there's entertainment value in watching the clown show of fringe weirdos drawn to the movement – one especially enthusiastic dolt swerves from terrarium theory to anti-vaxxer and Young Earth talking points in a matter of seconds – Clark also offers a compassionate view, hoping that the brighter ones might be talked back to an acceptance of reality. I want to believe he's right.

April 30, 9 pm, TIFF 1; May 2, 1 pm, TIFF 1; May 6, 8:30 pm, TIFF 1

Review: 'I'm Leaving Now (Ya Ma Voy)'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Chelsea Phillips-Carr](#) • Published April 25th, 2018 [180 Comments](#)



I'm Leaving Now / Ya Me Voy
(USA/Mexico, 74 minutes)

Dir: Lindsey Cordero, Armando Croda

Programme: Made in Mexico. (World Premiere)

A camera attached to a cart full of recyclables is pulled through New York at dawn. In the dim light, with scenes crowded by used bottles and cans, we watch as the city is made viscerally uncomfortable. The bottles rattle over the uneven ground and crash over steps, and the smooth sidewalks and welcoming streets of the metropolis are given new meaning in this context. This is how *Ya Me Voy* opens, with the after-hours ritual performed by Felipe, a Mexican immigrant living in the States. Having worked at low paying jobs and supplementing that income by collecting trash, Felipe has spent the last 16 years away from his family, sending them back money but never making enough to go home himself. In Lindsey Cordero and Armando Croda's documentary, we watch Felipe over the course of two years as he attempts to support his family and return home, while dealing with the conflict of what family means when you've been kept apart for so long.

Ya Me Voy begins with an astute exploration of Felipe's situation. The issue of Felipe's economic state, trapping him in America, and denying him the family life he so desires, is broadened by the personal turmoil Felipe faces. He expresses love for his family, but has doubts of what they can feel for him, particularly his son whom he hasn't seen since he was a baby. He wants an intimate bond that can't be fostered by distance. An upbeat, extroverted individual, Felipe is a charismatic figure, and watching him descend into despair and the depths

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of loneliness is heartbreaking. Cordero and Croda's doc manages to give humanity to the immigration story by allowing it to encompass complex emotions as well as economic and political realities.

At the same time, it is difficult to watch *Ya Me Voy* and feel totally comfortable. This goes beyond how uncomfortable we should feel, over the state of things, which keep people from their families, denying them the basic comforts of life, and their emotional needs, in order to survive. Watching Felipe languish before the camera, it is hard not to question what he got out of the experience, and why the filmmakers couldn't have aided by him. The observational style of the doc makes one feel helpless. But is that productive? While the film offers a necessary perspective on race, class, and nationality, it seems too ready to allow Felipe's problems to unfold unaided, bringing up questions of why this man must suffer on-screen for our education and entertainment.

I'm Leaving Now screens:

-Sat, Apr. 28 at 6:00 PM at Scotiabank

-Mon, Apr. 30 at 2:45 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sun, May 6 at 5:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox

*Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'On Her Shoulders'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 25th, 2018 [180 Comments](#)



Nadia Murad sits in the UNODC office, preparing for an upcoming speech at the UN Hot Docs

On Her Shoulders

(USA, 94 min.)

Dir. Alexandria Bombach

Programme: Special Presentations (International Premiere)

Films like *On Her Shoulders* are awkward to review. When a documentary tackles a subject that is still making headlines, the breadth and depth of its inquiry is inevitably limited. The doc has no meat beyond the portrait of its subject and the cause for which she is “the face.” The subject deserves one’s attention, so disapproval of the film feels like dismissal of her story.

A circular dance between cynicism and forgiveness, however, invites one to recognize that a film like *On Her Shoulders* deserves a platform even if the audience likely to be moved by it simply can’t be bothered to read the paper or watch the evening news. If it gives a wider reach to a worthy cause, that’s still fine.

The subject of *On Her Shoulders* is Nadia Murad Basee Taha. Her story is a devastating account of being ripped from her school in Kocho, a small village of Sinjar, Iraq, and forced into sexual slavery by ISIS. She escaped, but lost many friends and family members in ISIS’s violent slaughter of the Yazidi, a Kurdish religious minority. As a survivor, Murad provides a voice for

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Yazidi women waiting to be saved and was appointed the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking in 2016. The passion with which Murad speaks about the plight of other women affected by ISIS will hopefully keep momentum going when audiences and news cycles have the attention span of a Twitter feed.

Alexandria Bombach won a directing prize at Sundance for this portrait of Murad, but *On Her Shoulders* might just as well have been made by Murad's publicist. It's a humanizing portrait of a figure who absolutely deserves attention. But it's not exactly a penetrating one.

The bulk of the film is essentially behind the scenes footage of Murad on an intense media tour as she prepares to address the United Nations. Even human rights causes have junket-style gong shows of interviews, cameras, sound bites, bad potato salad, selfies, and speeches. The film sees Murad relive her traumatic experience as a sex slave, and she tearfully speaks about her lost friends and family repeatedly to journalists fishing for salacious details. It's a grind and the exhaustion she exhibits evokes the weight of the world on her shoulders. (Hence the title.) Then, with the aid of Amal Clooney, she addresses the United Nations in a triumphant finale.

Outside of the interviews that are already a YouTube hit or Google search away, Bombach features some candid observational footage of Murad finding her breath outside the media blitz. Much of these sequences play out in Canada as Murad addresses MPs in Ottawa and encourages them to save the Yazidi. After filming Murad doing a little shopping at Aritzia and shooting some B-roll for CTV by the eternal flame, Bombach finds one truly great shot that conveys with disarming frankness the hell Murad escaped. Murad and her aid, Murad Ismael, simply watch a band perform at Parliament Hill. She notes the crowd of people sitting in the sun, enjoying the music, and taking photos by the Peace Tower. "Nobody is blowing themselves up," Murad observes with a mix of awe and relief.

Murad's voice arises again in new direct address interviews with Bombach intercut throughout the film. Here's where *On Her Shoulders* succeeds. Murad gives her story in her voice and in her terms. She answers the hard questions that many reporters and politicians are too timid to ask. Murad vents her frustration over being treated and interviewed as if she's a Kardashian when she has a legitimate reason to be in the spotlight: people are dying, girls are being raped, lives are being destroyed, and ISIS is waging a genocide.

Her strong perspective offers a how-to guide for interviewing survivors and for putting their stories to productive use to inspire change. The film about her, similarly, is a guide on the pros and cons of cranking out a movie to capture the zeitgeist.

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On Her Shoulders screens:

- Tues, May 1 at 6:15 PM at Isabel Bader
- Wed, May 2 at 10:00 AM at TIFF Lightbox
- Sat, May 5 at TIFF Lightbox

Review: 'Love, Scott'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Chelsea Phillips-Carr](#) • Published April 25th, 2018 [1 Comment](#)



Scott Jones in *Love, Scott*
Laura Marie Wayne / NFB

Love, Scott

(Canada, 76 minutes)

Dir: Laura Marie Wayne

Programme: Canadian Spectrum (North American Premiere)

In 2013, Scott Jones was stabbed outside a bar in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. Though he survived, Scott was paralyzed from the waist down. The attack, which many believe to be motivated by homophobia, was never charged as a hate crime. In *Love, Scott*, director Laura Marie Wayne creates an intimate portrait of her close friend as he discusses the aftermath of this traumatic event.

While *Love, Scott* isn't an autobiographical doc, director Laura Marie Wayne has created a near stream-of-consciousness depiction of his daily life. We watch and learn with him as he comes to terms with his disability, working with music to both forge through trauma, and create an environment of acceptance and caring. Scott takes on political discussions, as do his friends and family: they talk about what it means to be a gay man today in Canada, reference the activism inspired by the attack on him, and bring up their hopes for the future. But the film never distances itself from the personal. Wayne makes sure that every political discussion is centred firmly upon Scott's own feelings and experiences. We get deeply introspective segments where Scott is able to discuss his thoughts on art, love, loneliness, and community.

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But ultimately, *Love, Scott* can be too close to its subject. Though concluding with statistics about hate crimes and violence against the LGBTQ community in Canada, the film is individualistic. This is about Scott Jones, friend of Laura Marie Wayne. With so much of his, and her, subjectivity, the film never meets up to what it wants to be: a documentary which can follow one man but equally discuss the social issue of homophobia. Though broader political questions are stretched a bit thin, *Love, Scott* is still a beautiful tribute to one man as he considers his place in the world.

Love, Scott screens:

-Sat, Apr. 28 at 6:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Fri, May 4 at 3:00 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sat, May 5 at Scotiabank

*Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-love-scott>

Review: 'Bathtubs Over Broadway'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 25th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Courtesy Hot Docs

Bathtubs Over Broadway

(USA, 87 min.)

Dir. Dava Whisenant

Programme: Artscapes (International Premiere)

Forget *Bye Bye Birdie*. Forget *Cats*. Forget *An American in Paris*, *Rent*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Cabaret*, and especially *Mamma Mia*. The truly American art form is not the Broadway show but the industrial musical. This obscure corner of show business receives a laugh-out loud appreciation from director Dava Whisenant in *Bathtubs Over Broadway*.

Audiences having no familiarity with the wacky world of industrial musicals are in for a treat! Get ready to laugh, sing, cheer, and be dazzled by the unsung art of capitalist show tunes.

Bathtubs Over Broadway uncovers the peculiar art form of industrial musicals by following the exuberant enthusiasm of Steve Young, a former staff writer of *The Late Show with David Letterman*, as he digs deep into the history of the genre. These musicals aren't the average song and dance numbers performed nightly for the masses. Industrial musicals, Young explains, are obscure productions created by companies of 1960s/1970s corporate America. They are rare to hear since companies performed them infrequently and distributed recordings as mementos to employees, if they even recorded them at all.

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Industrial musicals offer full-fledged numbers about the company product and mission, like ditties about sliced bread or razzle-dazzle diesel songs. They are the hallmark of pure American cheese, yet the performers sell them with the utmost sincerity. The euphoric goodwill of musicals translates to an energized rally to motivate salesmen to peddle more cars, refrigerators, and even toilets.

Young is a really fun guide who leads the audiences through the oddities of his guilty pleasure. His appreciation of the industrial musicals debunks the preconceptions that one might have towards them and breaks them down in an unabashed appraisal of an American idealism that seems forgotten. As Young combs through his extensive collection of industrial records and shares some highlight songs, he ponders what might possess an aspiring performer to slum it singing and dancing about Fords and Frigidaires.

The more *Bathtubs Over Broadway* digs into the niche market of industrial musical fan culture, however, the more it reveals how these singers actually had it made. It turns out that industrial musicals were bigger business than Broadway. The metaphor Young uses is that Broadway musicals were the tip of the iceberg while industrials were the hidden 80-90%. Performing is performing and the stars of the industrials made far more money than they would have on Broadway, while the seemingly silly performances dressed up in Miller Beer bottles or fast food attire provided invaluable training and experience. The doc scores interviews with stars like Martin Short, Chita Rivera, and the late Florence Henderson who all got their breaks in industrials. Young even finds industrials penned and scored by famed composers such as Sheldon Harnick (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Stephen Sondheim (*Into the Woods*), and John Kander and Fred Ebb (*Chicago*).

The real find of the documentary, however, is the master of the industrial musical composition, Sid Siegel. His musical *The Bathrooms are Coming* receives a vague reference at the beginning of the doc as Young's daughters mention the album as evidence of their dad's quirk, and Whisenant delays the revelation of the music until one can have a full appreciation of its greatness and novelty. *The Bathrooms are Coming* is a 1969 musical presented by American-Standard that exalts the all-American magic of bathroom fixtures. The songs are deadpan hilarious, but sweetly earnest. Young's delight in the musical highlights the difficulty of his research as he shows images on the album art: a caveman with a bathroom plunger, a hillbilly with a jug of moonshine, and some go-go girls throwing come hither glances that only lets one speculate about what transpired onstage in these rare performances. Young tracks down a performer from the musical to learn more and, lo and behold, she reveals that she has a 16mm

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recording of *The Bathrooms are Coming*. The find is so rare that she might as well have produced Orson Welles' original cut of *The Magnificent Ambersons*.

And what enjoyable crap *The Bathrooms are Coming* is. It's the best and worst of industrial musicals as Whisenant shows clips of the stars sing about "dreaming and creaming" in the bathroom and croon about the bathroom being "a special kind of place." Archival finds rarely strikes gold as well as they do in *Bathtubs Over Broadway*.

The hidden gems of Young and Whisenant's discoveries reveal far more about show business and Americana besides the mere novelty of the industrial musicals. The documentary evokes the spirit of Morgan Neville's *20 Feet from Stardom* by casting the spotlight on some great talents who found (relative) success by deviating from the conventional path. At the same time, the bizarre greatness of the industrial musicals evokes nostalgia for a bygone era of America values. These musicals hale from a time when companies genuinely cared about their employees.

Making employees feel valued and appreciated really matters and if corporate America needed to make strange self-congratulatory musicals to show people they contributions to the success of the company is meaningful, then so be it. The film tips its hat at a forgotten art, which reminded people that they matter. America might be going down the crapper, but this riotous doc reminds us that, like bathrooms, it can be a special kind of place—and certainly was, way back when.

Bathtubs Over Broadway screens:

- Tues, May 1 at 9:30 PM at Hart House
- Thurs, May 3 at 9:00 PM at TIFF Lightbox
- Sat, May 5 at 3:45 PM at Isabel Bader

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-bathtubs-over-broadway>

Review: 'Snowbirds' and 'Eviction Notice'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 25th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Courtesy Hot Docs

Snowbirds

(Canada, 47 min.)

Dir. Joannie Lafrenière

Programme: Canadian Spectrum (Toronto Premiere)

Canada geese are famous for their migration patterns. The big honking birds fly south in groups that mark the sky in flapping V formations. They depart every fall and return every spring, fully aware that Canada is the land they call home.

Joannie Lafrenière offers a nature documentary of sorts on the other great Canadian migration, the one that occurs each winter. These animals, known colloquially as “snowbirds,” are Canada’s other resident geese: retirees. Best known for 4 pm dinners, knee high sweat socks, and bad tans, the Canadian snowbird is a peculiarly quaint sight.

Snowbirds observes the migratory patterns of one unique V of birds. Lafrenière focuses on the aging goose population of Hallandale Beach in Florida, where a flock of Québécois snowbirds sets up camp each year. The film watches their seasonal behaviour with a droll and affectionate eye as they learn English, play shuffleboard, mingle by the pool, and visit the local hot dog stand where the resident grill master makes sauerkraut with care.

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Lafrenière observes members of the flock in offbeat vignettes that reveal the reasons they fly south each winter. There's chirpy Yvette, who loves to talk about the sun and show off the English she's learning at 82. Monique and Julien stay a bit closer to their nest and prefer to watch TV while avoiding the sun. 88-year-old Agathe, on the other hand, is a young girl at heart living on a diet of Pepsi and chocolate as she tans poolside with youngsters who respectfully call her "aunty." The snowbirds laugh about their failing bodies, but their minds are sharp and their personalities ring with youthful joie de vivre. They escape the frigidly unforgiving Canadian winter precisely because they want to live their remaining days to their fullest and brightest.

Birds of a feather flock together and Lafrenière captures a collective force among these geriatric Quebecois who command a small pocket of Florida's mobile home community each winter. *Snowbirds* finds quaint humour in seeing this rookery of geese who band together through sunshine and *La Survivance*. A strong collective cultural consciousness unites them with their un-Americanness, for the snowbirds all assert to Lafrenière that they're very much Quebecois even if they spend half the year in Trump's 'merica. Moreover, several of the retirees feel weary about the change in the political air and wonder if the sun is setting on their southern slice of paradise. It might be time to find another nest.

Lafrenière shoots *Snowbirds* in quirky wide shots that find humour in the incongruities between the snowbirds and their settings. Wrinkly tanned flesh contrasts with the muted palettes of the mobile homes, while expansive shots of the snowbirds flocking on beach and low angles of Agathe strutting her stuff en route to *la piscine* show the retirees as masters of their domains. The film conveys how aging is all a state of mind and one must do whatever keeps one young and healthy. The film also finds a special affinity for golden years as these snowbirds enjoy their final acts without giving a hoot for the life they leave behind every winter.

Screens with:

{image_2} * _Eviction Notice_

(Canada, 22 min.

Dir. Laura O'Grady

Developers are no friends of communities. The story of *Eviction Notice* is familiar as it tells of a community of Calgary mobile home owners forcibly uprooted from their neighborhood in the name of development. This incident is not the first episode of erasure to make room for cheap generic condos and golf courses. Sadly, it won't be the last as cities change and become prohibitively expensive for most residents.

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This familiarity makes *Eviction Notice* so compelling because its tale is all too relevant. Director Laura O'Grady takes audiences inside the homes of the residents as they fight their notice to vacate and try to keep the community they have built over the years. O'Grady does some fine investigating and outlines the facts of the case as residents seek fair compensation and the right to stay, yet their pleas fall on deaf ears as the courts inevitably favour developers.

The residents of Midfield Mobile Home Park tell compelling stories of the fight to keep their homes. O'Grady finds a range of perspective to illustrate the impersonal bad business of land development that fails to see a home beyond its mere property value. These people have lives rooted in the mobile home community, and few, if any of them, can truly afford to leave. Picking up a life isn't easy, particularly if, say, a resident is undergoing cancer treatment or has kids in school and a job near the home. The compelling and intimate perspectives of *Eviction Notice* put a human face on a problem that is far too rampant in our cities.

Snowbirds and *Eviction Notice*_ screens:

- Fri, Apr. 27 at 3:30 PM at Scotiabank
- Sat, Apr. 28 at 12:45 PM at Scotiabank
- Fri, May 4 at 12:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'The Night of All Nights'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Chelsea Phillips-Carr](#) • Published April 25th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



S2RFilm_Fruitmarket

The Night of All Nights

(Germany, 96 minutes)

Dir: Yasemin Samdereli

Programme: Special Presentations. (International Premier)

Four couples around the world open up about their relationships, which have all lasted, remarkably, longer than fifty years. In *When Harry Met Sally* -style interviews, each pair reflects on life before and beyond the moments that brought them together, and how they've grown as partners. Yasemin Samdereli's *The Night of All Nights* manages to do something delightful: it becomes a rom-com documentary.

Norman and Bill are a gay American couple who, despite their devotion, have only recently been allowed to get married. Kamala and Hampana are an inter-caste Indian couple, who fought against social restrictions to be together. Shigeko and Isao are a Japanese couple whose marriage was arranged, and not always happy. Hildegard and Heinz are a German couple — and that's it. This does become a bit of an issue: with three other fascinating partnerships, the "normal" one feels dull. Lacking the intrigue and the charisma of the others, it feels that they are distracting from what is more interesting.

Despite this misstep, *The Night of All Nights* more than makes up for it with the diverse cast it focuses on. We are given unique perspectives on relationships, and we encounter the hardships that are fought against to foster love and happiness. There are the big issues (the legal, the

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political) as well as the small. Watching how two people, sometimes with incredibly different lifestyles, personalities, and values, can come together in a near-perfect union, becomes part of the documentary's charm. With humour rather than sentimentality, *The Night of All Nights* is able to sell its almost too-upbeat content.

This lack of sentimentality lends itself very well to Shigeko and Isao's arranged marriage. With them, we see a couple who aren't madly in love. Struggling to forge a relationship, they figured out how to work together later in life, their marriage held together only by the stigma of divorce, and Shigeko's fear of single-motherhood. The documentary is lighthearted, but does not neglect to contemplate alternate narratives to romance, never turning the one story that doesn't end in pure joy into a melodrama by giving it the respect it deserves.

The Night of All Nights a thoughtful film. With its focus on heartwarming love stories, it has space for hardship and drama amidst its overarching romantic comedy. With balance and scope, Samdereli's film tackles the things that make relationships hard for everyone, but in a way that leaves a spectator feeling moved, and uplifted, by the affection that ultimately comes from these extended partnerships despite their difficulties.

The Night of All Nights screens:

- Saturday, Apr. 28 at 9:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox
- Monday, Apr. 30 at 12:45 PM at Isabel Bader
- Friday, May 4 at 9:00 PM at the Fox

Hot Docs review: The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution

Director Maya Gallus's festival opener takes on complex systemic issues within kitchen culture

BY NATALIA MANZOCCO

APRIL 25, 2018

12:36 PM



Maya Gallus's The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution profiles female chefs heading up kitchens around the world.

THE HEAT: A KITCHEN (R)EVOLUTION (Maya Gallus, Canada). 75 minutes. Rating: NNN

"We're like the chervil on a salad – some kind of garnish, because it looks good," laments New York City-based chef Victoria Blamey at the top of Maya Gallus's compact documentary, which spotlights the obstacles faced by seven women trying to build careers as chefs and create change from within a macho industry.

Among them are locals Suzanne Barr, who Gallus catches in transition between restaurants; ex-cook Ivy Knight, who shares a jaw-dropping tale of abuse in the kitchen; and Charlotte Langley, who points out that female chefs, too, face the temptation to trash-talk, bully and objectify as they gain power.

Gallus doesn't go too deep on any one of the film's subjects, which limits the film in terms of dramatic push and pull, but viewers will still walk away with a deeper understanding of a complex systemic issue.

Apr 26, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; Apr 28, 1:15 pm, TIFF 1; May 6, 3:30 pm, Isabel Bader

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-the-heat-kitchen-revolution/>

Hot Docs review: On Her Shoulders

Alexandria Bombach has created an empathetic, uncomfortable study of a woman pushing herself through her worst memories

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 25, 2018

11:59 AM



ON HER SHOULDERS (Alexandria Bombach, U.S.). 94 minutes. Rating: NNNN

This harrowing documentary profiles Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a Yazidi woman from northern Iraq who witnessed the murder of her family members by ISIS and endured months of brutal captivity before escaping. Now an activist and a United Nations goodwill ambassador, she tours the world telling her story – which inevitably forces to relive the darkest time of her life, over and over again.

On Her Shoulders is painfully aware of the toll Murad's work takes upon her, and director Bombach makes sure we are, too. Without ever exploiting her subject's past or pain, she's made an empathetic, uncomfortable study of a woman pushing herself through her worst memories in order to make sure no one else ever has a similar experience.

May 1, 6:15 pm, Isabel Bader; May 2, 10 am, TIFF 3; May 5, 4 pm, TIFF 2

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-on-her-shoulders/>

Hot Docs review: Anote's Ark

Canadian doc shows the impact of climate change on two people living in a low-lying Pacific island republic

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

APRIL 25, 2018

11:57 AM



ANOTE'S ARK (Matthieu Rytz, Canada). 77 minutes. Rating: NNN

Global indifference to climate change becomes personal in **Matthieu Rytz's** doc about Kiribati, a low-lying Pacific island republic at risk of disappearing due to sea-level rise.

The Montreal director primarily follows former president **Anote Tong** as he fruitlessly attempts to draw attention to his country's plight. Resigned, he purchases land on Fiji and explores building a \$50-billion floating city – though neither escape plan seems popular or feasible. Meanwhile, a mother of three named **Sermay** takes a more obvious route: she moves to New Zealand.

Aerial views reveal how it can be hard to discern between land and sea in Kiribati, and footage shows villages swept away in a hurricane. Unfortunately, the doc doesn't always rise to its compelling imagery. The floating city idea is under-explored, as is Tong's pessimism. We see high-powered meetings but don't get a strong sense of his life – political or personal – in Kiribati. When he's replaced by an opposition government that later undoes his climate work, the info is conveyed in a postscript.

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Sermay's storyline is less flashy but more impactful, showing the emotional toll of climate change inaction on Indigenous culture.

May 1, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema (Big Ideas screening); **May 2, 10:15 am, TIFF 2; May 4, 1 pm, TIFF 1**

NOW Magazine – April 25, 2018

Hot Docs review: Strand: Under The Dark Cloth

One of the biggest names in American photography gets the documentary treatment

BY SUSAN G. COLE

APRIL 25, 2018

11:53 AM



STRAND: UNDER THE DARK CLOTH (John Walker, Canada). 81 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Photography giant Paul Strand comes under intense scrutiny in this entry, part of Hot Docs's John Walker retrospective.

Via interviews with many of Strand's collaborators and two of his wives, Walker, who was mentored by the artist, reveals how Strand went from photographer to filmmaker – he's credited with one of the first documentaries ever made – and then back to his first love, photography, all the time striving for social justice.

Not surprisingly, since it's about a visual artist, this doc is beautiful to look at. A sequence comparing Strand's early photos with the paintings of modernists is especially arresting and his film imagery, especially in scenes from the anti-Ku Klux Klan feature *Native Land*, is powerful.

But it's not all deadly serious – consider his portraits of celebrities in 60s Paris. And what's not to like about a movie that features Georgia O'Keeffe?

May 1, 3:15 pm, TIFF 2

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-strand-under-the-dark-cloth/>

NOW Magazine – April 25, 2018

Hot Docs review: The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From A Mythical Man

Tommy Avallone's doc provides a fascinating look at how technology often prevents us from being present

BY **GLENN SUMI**

APRIL 25, 2018

11:49 AM



THE BILL MURRAY STORIES: LIFE LESSONS LEARNED FROM A MYTHICAL MAN

(Tommy Avallone, U.S.). 70 minutes. Rating: NNNN

The internet is rampant with examples of actor Bill Murray showing up at someone's birthday party or touch football game, washing a stranger's dishes or taking on temporary bartender duties at a club.

Tommy Avallone's sweet doc investigates many of these stories, forming a theory – put forth by many a journalist and author before – that these in-the-moment encounters are tied both to the actor's improv training and life philosophy.

While the structure of the film grows slightly tedious – Avallone repeatedly tries to reach Murray for an interview on his 1-800 number to create his own “Bill Murray moment” – the doc provides a fascinating look at celebrity, spontaneity and how technology often prevents us from being present.

Stay after the closing credits for one of the loveliest tales of all.

Apr 30, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; May 2, 10:30 am, TIFF 1; May 5, 3:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; May 6, 10 am, TIFF 1

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-bill-murray-stories-life-lessons/>

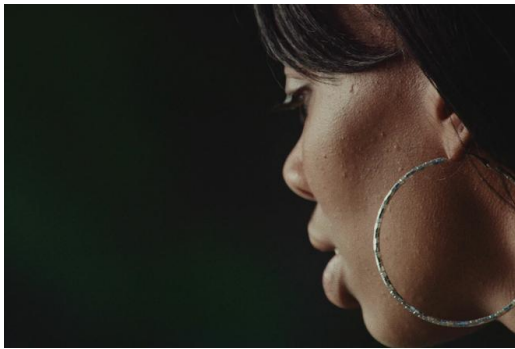
Hot Docs review: Blowin' Up

Powerful film examines a progressive program in New York involving women arrested for prostitution-related crimes

BY SUSAN G. COLE

APRIL 25, 2018

11:48 AM



BLOWIN' UP (Stephanie Wang-Breal, U.S.). 97 minutes. Rating: NNNN

In 2004, a gob-smackingly progressive program is initiated in Queens, in which New York's justice system gives women arrested for prostitution-related crimes the option of forgoing a trial in favour of counselling sessions. If they attend the sessions, their charges are dropped.

Stephanie Wang-Breal's persistent cameras capture conversations – and the close relationships – among the program's participants, including special court judge **Toko Serita**, counsellor **Eliza Hook** and women, many of them illegal immigrants from China, caught up in sex work life.

Attempts to zero in on the personal lives of Serita and Hook almost derail the pic, but *Blowin' Up* (the term for leaving the sex trade) winds up being a powerful ode to a sanctuary city – even if Trump's Immigration Services have started invading to sweep up the undocumented.

May 1, 6:45 pm, Hart House; May 3, 12:30 pm, TIFF 1; May 5, 9 pm, Revue

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-blowin-up/>

Hot Docs review: 306 Hollywood

This is possibly the most self-consciously whimsical documentary imaginable

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 25, 2018

11:26 AM



306 HOLLYWOOD (Elan Bogarín, Jonathan Bogarín, U.S.). 94 minutes. Rating: N

After their grandmother Annette Ontell dies in 2011, siblings Elan and Jonathan Bogarín decide to “excavate” her Newark home and the belongings she left behind. The result is the most excruciating, self-consciously whimsical documentary imaginable, a hipster testament that I honestly wanted to set on fire.

The siblings spent their lives videotaping themselves, their grandmother and their mother, Marilyn, and that footage is sprinkled throughout the film. There’s also plenty of footage of Elan and Jonathan discussing the things they find in the house, and there is not one goddamn second in which they are not performing for the camera. The whole thing is pitched at a level of twee self-congratulation, and the movie gets worse and worse as the Bogaríns deploy one wacky device after another.

Items are lined up in tableaux that Wes Anderson might find a little much. An audiotaped fight is re-enacted with actors lip-syncing the argument. A cache of vintage foundation garments and dresses leads to a dance sequence with befrocked women swanning around the front yard.

NOW Magazine– April 25, 2018 (2 of 2)

I have no illusions that some will find this film's eccentricities and endless stylistic quirkery refreshing and adorable, and it's true that, as documentaries go, 306 Hollywood is anything but conventional.

But it's so convinced of its charms that it quickly becomes insufferable; it's like being trapped in a corner at a party with a person who doesn't understand you wanted to leave an hour ago. NW

April 30, 9:15 pm, TIFF 2; May 2, 4 pm, TIFF 2; May 5, 3:30 pm, Scotiabank 13.

Hot Docs review: Active Measures

Jack Bryan's doc examines connections between Donald Trump and Russia

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 25, 2018

11:19 AM



ACTIVE MEASURES (Jack Bryan, U.S.). 112 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Assembling a wealth of information and presenting it with relentless, almost shark-like momentum, *Active Measures* sets out to prove two very simple points beyond any reasonable doubt: first, that Donald Trump's ascendance to the presidency was the result of deliberate Russian interference in the American electoral process – tactics Vladimir Putin had previously deployed in Ukraine, Georgia and Estonia – and second, that Trump is neck-deep in questionable financial relationships with the Russian oligarchy and has been for decades.

Jack Bryan builds his case with archival footage and present-day interviews with journalists, intelligence officials, diplomats and politicians like Hillary Clinton and John McCain, both of whom weathered smears and worse from Trump and his enablers during the 2016 campaign.

Paralleling the early accusations of Trump allowing Russian gangsters to launder money through Manhattan's Trump Tower and the Taj Mahal casino with the unsavory alliances that enabled Putin's rise to power in the 90s, *Active Measures* tracks the two men all the way to their current status as puppet and puppet master.

I had worried that the speed of breaking news would make this film stale-dated before it even premieres, but Bryan's coverage is current enough to include a look at Cambridge Analytica's

NOW Magazine – April 25, 2018 (2 of 2)

data-mining operations, and glimpses of Trump's hapless counsel Michael Cohen. The only question Active Measures doesn't answer definitively is whether Trump is actually aware of Putin pulling his strings, or if he's just another useful idiot. Either way, we're all screwed.

April 30, 9 pm, Isabel Bader; May 2, 3:45 pm, TIFF 1; May 4, 6:15 pm, TIFF 1

Hot Docs review: Golden Dawn Girls

Director Håvard Bustnes looks at female supporters of an extremist right-wing political party in Greece

BY SUSAN G. COLE

APRIL 25, 2018

11:17 AM



GOLDEN DAWN GIRLS (Håvard Bustnes, Norway, Denmark, Finland). 92 minutes. Rating: NNN

In Greece, as the country's economy continues to tank and hostility to the European Union escalates, the extremist right-wing political party Golden Dawn finds a foothold. When **Håvard Bustnes** begins filming female supporters, including the daughter of party leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos, they are happy to stay in the background as “regular” housewives, but when Michaloliakos and his henchman are arrested on suspicion of forming a criminal organization these women emerge as impressive leaders.

Bustnes inserts himself into the film, sometimes getting in the way of the action. And his line of questioning to the women gets repetitive. But he exposes the party's Nazi sympathies and fascist agenda – their supporters feel humiliated by the IOC the way Germans felt debased in the aftermath of the First World War – and those tiki torches are truly terrifying.

May 1, 8:30 pm and May 3, 12:45 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 6, 12:45 pm, TIFF 2

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-golden-dawn-girls/>

Hot Docs review: The Cleaners

Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck's film is a frustratingly superficial look at online content monitors

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 25, 2018

11:13 AM



THE CLEANERS (Hans Block, Moritz Riesewieck, Germany, Brazil). 88 minutes. Rating: NN

In a cubicle farm in Manila, contractors spend hours and hours scouring social-media sites for objectionable images, determining whether or not they violate a given site's terms of service. The Cleaners sits down with these people and examines what this job does to a person.

Or at least that's the pitch. In practice, Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck's film is a frustratingly superficial treatment of its subject, failing to really push into the questions it raises and unwilling (or unable) to show us any of the images with which these content moderators struggle. There's also a weird blind spot about the religious culture of the Philippines – one of the moderators defines the job as looking for and eliminating "sin," and The Cleaners just lets it hang there without going any further.

Still, if you want a movie that's mostly made up of screens glowing with unspoken menace, The Cleaners is definitely that.

April 30, 6:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema (Big Ideas screening); May 2, 2:45 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 4, 9 pm, Revue Cinema

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-the-cleaners/>

Hot Docs review: The Blue Wall

Richard Rowley's documentary about the killing of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald by a Chicago police officer will infuriate you, even though its story is sadly familiar

BY NORMAN WILNER

APRIL 25, 2018

11:08 AM



THE BLUE WALL (Richard Rowley, U.S.). 76 minutes. Rating: NNNN

On the night of October 20, 2014, **Laquan McDonald** was shot and killed by a Chicago police officer on the street near a Burger King. The official story was that he'd pulled a knife and lunged at the officers who wanted to question him about car break-ins in the area; officer **Jason Van Dyke** had no choice but to defend himself.

It took over a year for the truth to come out: McDonald was facing away from Van Dyke and the other officers when Van Dyke opened fire, shooting the 17-year-old a total of 16 times.

The Blue Wall recounts the incident and the subsequent cover-up through security footage, news broadcasts and present-day interviews, moving chronologically from the shooting to the official spin to the bad faith and outright lies that eventually crumbled as more and more evidence came to light. (The film makes a good case that mayor **Rahm Emanuel** and his staff tried to bury a crucial dash-cam video because its release would have threatened his 2015 re-election chances.)

It's a story that's no less exasperating for its familiarity, but Rowley – director of the Oscar-nominated Dirty Wars – makes us feel the pain and rage of McDonald's family and community,

NOW Magazine – April 25, 2018 (2 of 2)

framing it against the cynical rationalizations an institution deploys to maintain its authority and avoid taking responsibility for its mistakes.

May 1, 9 pm, Isabel Bader; May 2, 12:30 pm, Hart House; May 3, 9 pm, Scotiabank 3.

#TorontoStrong: A weekend that will bring the city together



PATRICIA D'CUNHA | POSTED FRIDAY, APR 27TH, 2018



It has been an emotional and traumatic time for our city. This weekend, let us try to start the healing process by going back into the community and taking back the spirit that was lost. Several events are taking place, including a vigil that will bring us together in strength and solidarity. Have a safe weekend, everyone.

Events

#TorontoStrong vigil

This Sunday, the city is holding a vigil to remember the victims of Monday's van attack. Over the past week, memorials and moments of silence were held across the city and around the country, including a growing memorial at Olive Square — just steps away from where the horrific attack happened along a stretch of Yonge Street in North York. And now, the city will come together again for the #TorontoStrong vigil, which is taking place at Mel Lastman Square at 7 p.m. The vigil is being organized in partnership with Faith in the City, and the Toronto Area Interfaith Council. Earlier this week, the city set up the #TorontoStrong Fund to help the victims and their families, first responders, and those affected by the trauma.

Ahead of the vigil, a walk will be held along that section of Yonge, in an effort to help heal and show support for victims and those traumatized by the attack. "Let's link arms and reclaim our sense of safety and community," the group writes on Facebook. Organizers plan to meet at 5:30 p.m. on the north side at Olive Square and on the south side at Albert Standing Park. Both groups will then converge at Mel Lastman Square.

The best in documentaries

Over the past 25 years, Hot Docs has been showcasing the best in documentary films, and that tradition continues this year. From now until May 6, the festival will showcase 247 films and 16 other projects from 56 countries. Some of the documentaries include *The Heat: A Kitchen*

Breakfast Television – April 25, 2018 (2 of 3)

(R)evolution, which delves into the kitchens of the world's top women chefs; *Active Measures*, an investigative look into Russia's alleged involvement in the 2016 U.S. presidential election; *The Blue Wall*, which is about the police killing of an unarmed black teen in Chicago; and a free screening of *The Trolley*, detailing how the streetcar changed public transit around the world. The festival will also include films that were screened in its first year: *The War Room*, which is about the campaign strategists that shaped Bill Clinton's run for the White House in 1992; and a recount of the 1990 Oka Crisis in *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*.

Khalsa Day reflection and parade

Sikhs from across the GTA and beyond, as well as politicians and other dignitaries, will be taking part in the 40th annual Khalsa Day celebration on Sunday to mark Vaisakhi, the Sikh New Year. The event starts at 9 a.m. at the Enercare Centre on CNE grounds with prayers, hymns, traditional music, and food served from a communal kitchen. It will be followed by a colourful parade that will make its way to Nathan Phillips Square. The parade starts just after 1 p.m. and will travel east on Lakeshore Boulevard to York Street, and then onto University Avenue. The festivities will continue at the square until 5:30 p.m. During the day-long event, prayers will be offered for the victims of this week's van attack in North York and the Humboldt Broncos bus crash in Saskatchewan.

Canada's Wonderland opens for new season

You know that summer is around the corner when Canada's Wonderland opens for a new season. On Sunday, amusement ride enthusiasts and their families will descend on the park to soak in all the fun. Aside from the existing fan favourites, the two new attractions include Lumberjack, which takes riders 360 degrees in the air on two swinging 'axe' pendulums, and Flying Canoe, an interactive family ride that lets you control the journey. Some of the other highlights include food and street festivals, and a month-long celebration for Canada Day.

Walk for Muscular Dystrophy

Forget the boots and lace up your sneakers for a walk that is being held Saturday in support of those who are living with neuromuscular disorders. The walk takes place on different dates in more than 45 cities across Canada. The walk on Saturday is being held in North York at Earl Bales Park. Participants can choose between one-kilometre and five-kilometre routes. The event also includes children's activities, snacks, refreshments, and prizes.

Road closures

Allen Road partial closure

Drivers who need to use Allen Road this weekend will have to divert around a closure. Allen is scheduled to be partially closed in both directions between Sheppard Avenue West to Highway 401 from 11 p.m. on Friday to 5 a.m. on Monday. Road crews will be completing spring maintenance tasks. During the shutdown, drivers can use Dufferin and Bathurst streets.

The Bum Run

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Breakfast Television – April 25, 2018 (3 of 3)

Street, Spadina Avenue, College Street and Bay Street for the event that raises money and awareness for colon cancer. Queen's Park Crescent will also be closed from College to Bloor.

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#TorontoStrong: A weekend that will bring the city together

BY PATRICIA D'CUNHA

POSTED APR 26, 2018 1:23 PM EDT

LAST UPDATED APR 27, 2018 AT 5:26 AM EDT



Flowers, notes and candles are piled high at a vigil on Yonge Street in Toronto on April 24, 2018. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Galit Rodan

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City News – April 25, 2018 (2 of 3)

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City News – April 25, 2018 (3 of 3)

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10 things to do in Toronto today



Events in Toronto today include the kick off of Digifest and Hot Docs, plus works from the CONTACT festival and a new kind of classical music experience.

April 26-28

Digifest

Corus Quay

It's the first day of Digifest, a huge gathering of creatives and leaders from the digital media and gaming industry.

April 26 - May 6

Hot Docs

Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

This year's Hot Docs will see over 200 documentaries from Canada and around the world showcased, including many female-driven films.

April 26 - June 7

Summer of the Wild Wallflower

Gallery House

Artist Jana Brike presents her colourful, disturbing

#TorontoStrong: A weekend that will bring the city together

by PATRICIA D'CUNHA

Posted Apr 26, 2018 1:23 pm EDT

Last Updated Apr 27, 2018 at 5:26 am EDT



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Weekend events in Toronto April 27-29 2018



Weekend events in Toronto include the launch of the CONTACT Photography Festival and Toronto's newest public space turned into an art gallery. There's also a huge vegetarian spring market and diva party.

Top Picks

Date	About the Event	Location
April 26 - May 6	Hot Docs This year's Hot Docs will see over 200 documentaries from Canada and around the world showcased, including many female-driven films.	Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema
April 27	Contact Festival Launch	Ryerson Image

The EFP at Hot Docs: European Docmakers Record New Cultural Shifts

By [Leo Barraclough](#)

[@LeoBarraclough](#)



CREDIT: COURTESY OF YLEISRADIO

The Changing Face of Europe, a program about to be launched at the [Hot Docs](#) festival in Toronto (April 26-May 6), presents 10 European documentaries that give a taste of Europe's filmmaking output, and a glimpse at some of the forces shaping the continent.

Shane Smith, the festival's director of programming, says that two of the themes it explore are people "grappling with the repercussions of history," and how, when the blinders are off, folks realize "they can't rely on what they are being told by their political leaders."

"Rodeo," which gets its international premiere at [Hot Docs](#), centers on the chaos surrounding Estonia's first free elections after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992, and the rapid introduction of free-market economics that followed. The story, which draws on archival footage alongside recent interviews with the politicians at the center of events, unfolds like a conspiracy thriller.

The film can be seen as "a kind of ode to making it through all the harsh conditions, and a certain sense of humor that always saves people," says Kiur Aarma, who co-directed with Raimo Joerand. He adds that his compatriots may need a poignant reminder of the dangers his country faced when it rejected authoritarian rule. "We should be glad that Estonia chose the other way from the very beginning, [and became] an open-minded and free society."

Another film that tackles the after-effects of the Soviet collapse is "The Russian Job," which has its North American premiere at the festival. It follows a Swedish manager as he tries to modernize the Lada automobile plant in Russia. When Petr Horky, who makes his directorial debut with the film, visited the factory as a journalist, he says the situation recalled a Franz Kafka novel, "The Castle," "with this stranger coming in, bringing completely different attitudes,

Variety – April 26, 2018 (2 of 2)

and wanting to change people's minds, and bring in Western-style management. I saw this as an opportunity to capture this clash [of cultures]." The fact that the Lada brand had been a "symbol of Soviet pride" encouraged Horky "to document a historical transformation."

"Of Fish and Foe," which has its world premiere at the fest, focuses on another culture clash: between fishermen and the conservation group Sea Shepherd on the Scottish coast. It captures the "decline of rural traditions" and the conflict that can occur when urban folk move into rural areas, people who "have a different attitude toward the countryside and the environment," says Andy Heathcote, one of the film's co-directors. He says it shows "a schism that is appearing in the Western world between traditional values and newer ideas," and offers a skeptical take on some aspects of environmental activism.

Although the films touch on broad themes, many of them revolve around personal stories. "Global Family," which has its international premiere at Hot Docs, follows three Somali brothers, one living in Germany, another in Italy and the third in Ethiopia, as they argue over the fate of their 88-year-old mother.

Many refugee families fleeing civil war have been similarly scattered, but it's also true of many other families, often due to globalization. "This will change the meaning of family itself," says Melanie Andernach, who co-directed the film.

They filmed the family over two years, building up a rapport. "We needed a lot of time to build the trust," she says. "We wanted to get close to them, showing all the feeling, the anger and in happier times."

The Changing Face of Europe is a collaboration between Hot Docs and European Film Promotion, a body that represents 38 film support agencies. Each agency nominated a film, and Hot Docs selected the final 10 on artistic merit.

Sonja Heinen, EFP's managing director, hopes the selection will show Europe's diversity by including films from countries that are sometimes neglected in festival lineups. She hopes it shows that "there is a very strong documentary scene right across Europe."

HOT DOCS: WHAT TO SEE DURING SPRAWLING (AND WAY COOL) DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

April 26, 2018

By Jim Slotek, Liam Lacey, and Kim Hughes

It's hard to argue with a good documentary. Even middling ones at least send viewers off with more information than they arrived with, which is more than you can say for a typical Hollywood blockbuster. And there is arguably no better place on the planet to see docs from around the planet than Toronto's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival — or Hot Docs for short.

Now in its 25th year, Hot Docs is the preeminent showplace for established and emerging filmmakers to connect with audiences and industry. The numbers speak for themselves: this year's festival will present 246 films and 16 interdisciplinary projects from 56 countries in 14 screening programs, with work by female filmmakers representing 50 per cent of overall programming.

Scanning the extensive list of participating titles, it almost seems as if every topic under the sun has been covered, which is a fancy way of saying there really is something for everyone. And the festival remains highly accessible, offering free same-day tickets for all screenings before 5 pm to seniors and students with valid photo I.D. at the venue box offices. Single tickets to screenings are a manageable \$17 each, or \$19 - \$24 each to special events.

While it's impossible to screen every film, Original-Cin's intrepid reviewers have seen a bunch, and here offer snapshot reviews. We'll be updating them daily. But don't be afraid to take a chance on a film that sounds interesting, or has a cool poster, or is from a country you've never seen a film from before. Chances are better than average you will be delighted, dazzled or at the very least, educated. View on!



1999.

1999

Montreal-based Samara Grace Chadwick's artful debut film follows the filmmaker as she examines a wave of student suicides that took place at the École Mathieu-Martin in Dieppe, New Brunswick, in the late-90s. Chadwick, who left at 16 to go to an out-of-province high school, meets and talks with classmates and teachers, revisiting the state of shock, denial, and reactions that engulfed the town and marked its residents' lives. She deliberately avoids a journalistic investigation (exactly why, how, where, how many) in favour of conversations over dinners, a symbolic act of communion, where the subjects switch, apparently randomly, between English, French, and the local dialect, Acadian-Chiac. Their talk is mixed with journals, photographs, and student footage in this tenderly curated memorial. Screening Sat April 28, 3:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 3; Sun April 29, 8:30 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3; Friday, May 4, 4 pm TIFF Bell Lightbox 3. – LL

THE ARTIST & THE PERVERT

Austrian Georg Friedrich Haas is reputedly "the most important living composer." He may now also be the most famous open exponent of master-slave BDSM relationships. That's been the case ever since his wife, kink expert/storyteller Mollena Williams-Haas, came out on both their behalves on Facebook. Suddenly, the New York Times had something to ask him about other than atonality. Beatrice Behn and René Gebhardt's doc is certainly different, and affectionate in its portrayal of the couple. They've suffered slings and arrows (Mollena being black makes the "slave" part of their relationship especially unacceptable to some) and finally incorporated their

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relationship conceptually into his music. Screening Fri, Apr 27, 8:30 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3; Sun, Apr 29, 11:45 am, Hart House Theatre; Fri, May 4, 6:30 pm, Hart House Theatre. -JS



The Artist & The Pervert.

BISBEE '17

Documentaries about historical re-enactment are almost a sub-genre of their own, though the specifics of Bisbee '17, a centenary event held last year in a small Arizona town, is distinguished by a biting topicality. In 1917, the local sheriff, backed by mining companies and a posse of 2,000 men, rounded up 1,200 striking mine workers at gunpoint, put them in cattle cars and shipped them out to the desert to die. Filmmaker Robert Greene and the townsfolk create an entertaining documentary feature with a definite point of view. Switching smoothly between dramatic recreations and interviews with residents, the film suggests a snapshot of America, with the descendants of the historical winners (the Bisbee older families) defending an indefensible history. On the other side, a gentle young Mexican-American man, Fernando Serrano, playing a miner, contends with memories of his own mother's deportation. As well-prepared as we are, the culminating mass deportation scene is unexpectedly wrenching. Screening Apr 27, 2:45 pm, Hart House Theatre; Mon, Apr 30, 11:30 am, Scotiabank 7; Fri May 4, 5:00 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3. – LL

CHEF FLYNN

As if culinary TV shows hadn't already left the humble home cook feeling inadequate, in comes Flynn McGarry, a kiddo cooking prodigy with an apprenticeship at Eleven Park West and

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gushing features in the New Yorker and New York Times under his tiny belt. All can be traced back to a restaurant young Flynn launched to massive acclaim in his parents' suburban California home. Flynn's otherworldly artistry with food is spectacular if daunting; director Cameron Yates does a good job of showing the enormous pressure to raise the stakes on presentation and innovation, asking us to consider when young is too young in the fiercely competitive world of food. Screening Sat, Apr 28, 6:45 pm, Isabel Bader Theatre; Sun, Apr 29, 10:45 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; Sat, May 5, 1:15 pm at Isabel Bader Theatre. -KH

COMMANDER ARIAN - A STORY OF WOMEN, WAR AND FREEDOM

It's perfect that the most hateful regime towards women, ISIS, has been kicked out of its strongholds in large part by a tough brigade of women soldiers. Alba Sotorra got dangerously close to the action following the Kurdish-Syrian Women's Protection Unit (a.k.a. the YPJ) as they made their way to liberate the city of Kobane, and followed her title character from the battlefield to a field hospital as she recovered from five (!) gunshot wounds. The movie ignores the complications of the Syrian/ISIS/Kurdish triangle (Assad's name is never mentioned). The doc restricts its theme to how the struggle gives these women's lives meaning. Screening Sun, Apr 29, 6:30 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 4; Mon, Apr 30, 10:30 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; Sun, May 6, 6:15 pm, Aga Khan Museum. -JS



The Heat: A Kitchen (R)Evolution

THE HEAT: A KITCHEN (R)EVOLUTION

The opening night doc by Maya Gallus introduces us to some famous kitchens and world famous women chefs – including Anne-Sophie Pic, the highest-Michelin-rated woman in the

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world, Gordon Ramsay acolyte Angela Hartnett, New York pioneer and role model Anito Lo and scrappy Toronto locals like Charlotte Langley and Suzanne Barr – all of whom seem to have had to deal with some level of abuse within the military-based chain of command that traditionally governs restos. You'll see Injustices and triumphs and practically taste the soulful cooking. Screening Apr 26, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema; Sat, Apr 28, 1:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; Sun, May 6, 3:30 pm, Isabel Bader Theatre. -JS

LAILA AT THE BRIDGE

The story of Afghanistan's "mother of addicts," Laila Haidari, who trolls for lost souls under an infamous bridge in Kabul habituated by opium and heroin addicts. Though she's provided sanctuary and Narcotics Anonymous treatment for 900 addicts (including her brother, now her operating partner), she is at war with her own government, whose complicity in the drug trade is an open secret. She finds herself in the media spotlight while running a restaurant with her residents for both therapy and fundraising. It's the true story of a truth-to-power heroine whose crusade remains steadfast through death-threats and setbacks. Screening Mon, Apr 30, 6:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; Tue, May 1, 10:30 am, Isabel Bader Theatre; Fri, May 4, 8:30 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 7. -JS

THE LONELY BATTLE OF THOMAS REID

A David and Goliath story for the modern age, Feargal Ward's sombre but riveting film follows Thomas Reid, a solitary man living a solitary life on his family's farm in Ireland. Thomas' days are decidedly his own: he tends his cows, listens to the radio, and stockpiles old newspapers like a champ. When Thomas is approached to sell his farm so microchip manufacturer Intel can expand, he refuses; thus begins a pitched battle not just for land but for the notion of stewardship and community. Does the promise of multiple jobs trump one man's right to maintain the property that's been in his family for generations? And what right does the state have to intervene? Ward uses actors to verbalize court proceedings, brilliantly recreating the inherent disembodiment of the action. Yet it is Thomas — taciturn, anti-social but fully present in his life — who beguiles. Screening Sun Apr 29, 5:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 4; Mon, Apr 30, 3:45 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3; Sun, May 6, 8:00 pm Scotiabank Theatre 7. - KH

LOVE, SCOTT

At once heartfelt and heart-breaking, filmmaker Laura Marie Wayne's soulful portrait of her friend Scott Jones scans as a lesson to humanity about the power of forgiveness in the wake of unfathomable violence. The film follows Jones, an openly gay Nova Scotia-based musician, in the aftermath of an attack that left him paralyzed from the waist down. His mistake? Making doe-eyes at homophobe Shane Edward Matheson at a bar. Wayne pads her film with impressionistic montages that don't always dazzle but there's no denying the power of the subject or the film's straight-up refusal to let Jones' attack be regarded as anything short of a hate crime. Screening Sat, Apr 28, 6:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 1; Sun, Apr 29, 10:15 am, Isabel Bader Theatre; Thu, May 3, 9:15 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2. -KH



Love, Scott

OF FATHERS AND SONS

Syrian director Talal Derki's second Sundance-winning doc (after 2013's *The Return to Homs*) sees the filmmaker returning to his home country to live with a family in a desert compound near the battle-front. Under the guise of making a jihad-friendly documentary, Derki achieves extraordinary access in showing how a soldier father, Abu Osama, indoctrinates his sons into a military-religious cult of the Al-Nusra Front (a Syrian Al-Quaida branch). As the boys grow, modern education is abandoned in favour of a system of apocalyptic fantasy and the celebration of violence. Scenes of bullying, abuse, and intense basic training for the boys are shocking in themselves, but perhaps more so because they are balanced with scenes of fatherly affection. No women or girls appear in the film, which was presumably a pre-condition for shooting, but

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also serves as its own cultural commentary. Screening Fri, Apr 27, 3:45 pm, Isabel Bader Theatre; Sat, Apr 28, 10:15 am, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; Sat, May 5, 5:30 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3. – LL

PRIMAS

One of the great ethical challenges of contemporary non-fiction filmmakers is to find ways to tell stories of trauma that don't exploit or augment the original suffering. That challenge is addressed by Montreal's Laura Bari in this visually striking, intensely personal story about her two inspiringly resilient teenage Argentinian nieces, Rocío and Aldana, close friends who share histories of sexual violence. At 10, Rocío was abducted, struck with a hammer, set on fire by her assailant, and left for dead. Aldana, in a more familiar scenario, was abused for years by her father. Through Bari's stylized, dream-like approach, we see how the young women are drawn to rituals — theatre and movement therapy, fairy tales, litanizing their physical and mental scars — to move through the life-long process of recovery. Screening Wed May 2, 8:45 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 7; Fri May 4, 6 pm TIFF Bell Lightbox 4. - LL

THE SILENCE OF OTHERS

The rocky terrain of Spain is covered with the unmarked graves of people murdered during the 40-year Franco regime. Directors Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar's *The Silence of Others* follows the six-year struggle to force the government to acknowledge the regime's crimes against humanity following a handful of elderly men and women and their legal team, led by Chilean judge Maria Servini. Their goal is to recover the bodies of relatives and convict Franco torturers who still walk the streets of Madrid. For those who have followed the story, some elements are scant: there's little attention to the momentum provided by the 2007 Historical Memory Law introduced by the Socialist Workers Party and the role of Judge Baltasar Garzón. The focus here is first-person stories of the elderly accusers, the ongoing zealotry of the pro-Francoists, and the ignorance of the post-Franco generation. Though not definitive, the film is a moving primer on the legal wrangles and struggle for Spain's conscience. Screening Fri Apr 27, 6:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 2; Sat April 28, 12:30 pm, TIFF Bell Lightbox 3, Sat. May 5, 11:45 am, Scotiabank Theatre 3. – LL



Slut Or Nut: Chronicle Of A Rape Trial

SLUT OR NUT: CHRONICLE OF A RAPE TRIAL

Presented as part of Hot Docs “Silence Breakers” sidebar on sexual assault, Slut or Nut (the title refers to the standard legal attacks on rape complainants) follows the case of York University student Mandi Gray, who was raped by a fellow graduate student, Mustafa Ururyar. Gray’s story is presented as a handbook for sexual assault victims, as experienced by Gray in her battle with the York University administration and the legal system before the eventual successful conviction. At times, the film has an oddly jaunty tone, having real-life assault victims speaking through animated cats (including “Jane Doe,” the woman who won a landmark 1998 case against the Toronto police force for using her as “bait” a decade earlier). The approach, while distracting, aims to show Gray’s irrepressible spirit, and also echoes the judge’s remarks that rape victims are not obliged to conform to any stereotypical behaviour. Screening Wed May 2, 9:00 pm, Isabel Bader Theatre; Thu May 3, 8:45 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 7; Fri May 4, 6:45 pm, TIF Bell Lightbox 3. -LL

TAKE LIGHT

So how does Nigeria, the most populous African country and its biggest energy producer, leave half its people without power? Canadian documentarian Shasha Nakhai takes us to her hometown, Port Harcourt, to paint a picture of the complex disaster. There’s a disruptive civil war in the Niger Delta. The state-owned power company has been sold and is now for profit. There is a war of sorts between users and power company employees, who spend much of their time trying to get money from people who literally climb poles to steal juice. We see it

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sympathetically through the eyes of these employees, on the front lines of a system almost designed to fail. Screening Fri, Apr 27, 6:45 pm, Hart House Theatre; Tue, May 1, 3:15 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3; Thu, May 3, 6:30 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3. -JS

TRANSFORMER

Two kinds of body transformation come together in this engaging film about Janae Marie Kroczaleski, a trans woman who, until recently, was known as world-famous male body builder Matt “Kroc” Kroczaleski. The film follows Kroczaleski through her transformation and her particular dilemma — a love of weight-lifting that gave her a massive 250-pound body, countered by an idea of being accepted as a woman. The film takes its cue from its charismatic star, who maintains an affectionate relationship with her three sons and weight-lifting gym buddies while watching her old career collapse. As Janae’s switches between identifies, her new mannerisms and voice reveal both her vulnerability and new emotional openness.

Screening Fri Apr 27, 6 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 3; Sun April 29 12:30 pm, Thu May 3, 8:15 pm, Scotiabank Theatre 13.



Yours in Sisterhood

YOURS IN SISTERHOOD

An interesting idea, undercut by a lack of consistency, Irene Lusztig’s *Yours in Sisterhood* is the record of a project to present letters that were written to the mainstream feminist publication *Ms. Magazine* in the 1970s, read aloud by contemporary women (and one man) from the same parts of the United States where the letters were sent. The readers then respond to the letters with

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varying amounts of insight: the most interesting are coloured by contemporary perspectives on race and sexuality. The strength of the film, like the #MeToo movement, is to reveal the extent of women's experience of subjugation across all walks of life. Screening Sat Apr 28, 6:45 pm, TIFF 2; Sun Apr 29, 3:45 pm, Scotiabank 4; Sat May 5, 5:45 pm, Fox Theatre.

<https://www.original-cin.ca/posts/2018/4/25/hot-docs-what-to-see-during-sprawling-and-way-cool-documentary-festival>

This Filmmaker Wants Us to Take Flat Earthers Seriously

Conspiracist respecter and 'Behind the Curve' creator Daniel J. Clark makes a case for empathy at Hot Docs April 30.

Frederick Blichert

Apr 26 2018, 4:09pm



Mark Sargent at the inaugural Flat Earth International Conference in Behind the Curve.

If there's one thing the last couple of years have taught me, it's that no opinion is uncontroversial. There are certain questions you shouldn't really have to ask on a first date, for instance, because the answers are self-evident. Are Nazis bad? Should reality-show hosts be president? Should Ricky Gervais get **his own Netflix special**? These are all no-brainers. As is the question of the Earth's shape.

It might be hard to take seriously the fringe belief that the Earth is flat, but a new documentary asks us to do just that, or at the very least to quit making fun. *Behind the Curve* offers portraits of flat Earthers as human beings who are worthy of our respect, and it makes a compelling case for empathy and dialogue.

Flat Earth believers are actually less fringe-y than I expected. According to a **recent survey**, while only 2 percent of American adults firmly believe the Earth is flat, 84 percent were confident that we live on a round planet. That leaves a lot of people on a pretty wobbly fence.

Something like a flat Earth theory seems relatively inconsequential—these aren't the people NASA's going to hire to pilot space shuttles, after all. Then again, as *Behind the Curve* makes clear, flat Earth is pretty much at the top of the conspiracy pyramid; you only get there once you've accepted everything else, from chemtrails to lizard people.

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And yet shouting them down doesn't seem particularly productive. The more we ostracize them, the more likely they are to dig in their heels and defy mainstream science. These aren't stupid people, as the film makes clear. A lot of them are smart, inquisitive, and actually want to test their theories—the problem is, they aren't satisfied by the overwhelmingly pro-round-Earth results. They need more proof. Always more proof.

Behind the Curve will have its world premiere in Toronto at **Hot Docs** April 30. VICE spoke to director Daniel J. Clark on the phone about his choice to offer flat Earthers a platform, and why we shouldn't be so quick to dismiss them. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.



Patricia Steere speaks at the inaugural Flat Earth International Conference in *Behind the Curve*.

VICE: What got you interested in flat Earth theories and following flat Earthers for this film?

Daniel J. Clark: I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but I've always been interested in how people really dive into them. One of my partners on the film, Nick [Andert], he texted me one day. He was on Reddit and saw something, and he's like, "We should make a documentary about flat

Earthers, because I don't think anyone's ever done that, and it seems to be growing." We looked into it, and a month and a half later, we started filming.

What did you hope to find from talking to these folks?

From the beginning, we knew we wanted to *not* make it a piece that was in any way making fun of flat Earthers or people with conspiracy theories. We knew we wanted to make it a very empathetic movie and understand how and why people might believe this. And then we found Mark [Sargent], who's one of the

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leaders of the movement, and talked to him for a minute, and it was like, "OK, this makes perfect sense, we're definitely going to do this."

You mention empathy, and I thought that was something really interesting in the film. Especially hearing scientists talking about treating people with these kinds of opposing theories—that we're tempted to dismiss outright—with empathy rather than derision. You definitely give the flat Earthers a lot of room to explain their positions. The two risks that come with that, I think, are either validating those theories, or mocking them.

A couple of people have expressed that: "Aren't you giving them some sort of credibility by making this movie?" I don't agree with that. I don't necessarily think that making a movie about someone validates what they believe, but it definitely shows that, hey, these are humans. I think a lot of people's immediate reaction is, "These people [flat Earthers] are dumb. These people are crazy." No, they're just people, and they believe something that you don't.

I'm sure flat Earthers are a mixed bag also. They'll say, "They at least showed our side of things, and that's what's important," and they'll probably also be upset that there are scientists in there, and the movie comes from a perspective of a non-flat Earther, which they knew. They didn't think I was a flat Earther.

Did that make it hard to get them to open up to you? I'm sure they're used to people treating them like crackpots.

I think at first that could be the case. I started with Mark, and then I went to Patricia [Steere] in

Houston. They have a show that a lot of people watch and appreciate, and so when they spoke on our behalf [to other flat Earthers], saying, "These people are fine, you should talk to them," I think that helped us get a lot of people to open up.

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Nathan Thompson (creator of the world's largest flat Earth discussion group) at the Flat Earth International Conference.

You mention how you see flat Earthers potentially reacting to the film. Did you see this film as something you wanted flat Earthers to watch, or was it aimed at everyone else?

At first there was the thought that we could make a movie that flat Earthers or conspiracy theorists would watch, and come to an understanding of themselves. That is still entirely possible, but as we were making it, I think we shifted our focus. I use my brother as an example. My brother is a super science person, loves sci-fi, loves everything about space, and he's one of the smartest people I've ever met. He has the *most* disdain for flat Earthers. He doesn't have the patience to even talk about it. I think I ended up making the movie more for people like him, which are people who aren't willing to give them even a moment's thought, or are aggressively against them.

If you're trying to fix the flat Earthers, that's honestly a much harder job than to try to get someone to see someone else as another human being. So the movie is kind of for my brother [laughs]. And he likes it.

Is that the end goal, [building] that kind of empathy and respect between people?

Absolutely. I think it's the biggest point that I'm trying to get people to take away from this. When

Neil deGrasse Tyson and Bill Nye go onscreen and just make fun of them and rip into them and call them stupid, does that help at all? No, that just absolutely secures the [flat Earth] position, and I think if you take that back to political ideologies, climate science, that kind of thing, you can really see how this same logic applies. The further you antagonize someone, the more secure they become in their position. I'm not

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saying our movie will change the world, but I hope it gives people an entertaining but also a thoughtful look at maybe treating people a little bit differently.

Did you find yourself, at any point, convinced by anything that the flat Earthers were telling you?

Yes. Well, not yes. Before we even went out, I actually sat and watched countless hours of flat Earth videos, trying to really get used to their claims and how they react to certain things, because when I was first watching every point they make, I'd be like "What? Come on!" I think that's the natural reaction if you're watching a flat Earth video for the first time, and they say that the sun and the moon are spotlights in the sky and Antarctica is an ice wall.

If I was ever with someone [and] they brought up a point that I couldn't immediately, in my head, say, "This is why," I would actually go research it. Everybody who becomes a flat Earther [first] tried to debunk it and couldn't, which is kind of like saying your keys are always in the last place you look. A lot of people do find the evidence that proves flat Earth wrong to them, and they stop exploring it. But those who don't, yes, they couldn't debunk it.

I noticed that everybody in the film who believes in a flat Earth kept on saying that: that they went in looking to debunk it. And I thought, am I just waiting for that moment? Am I going to watch this film, and that moment's going to come, that I'm going to stop believing that the Earth is what it is? That didn't happen [laughs].

To be fair to flat Earthers, we don't necessarily lay out their arguments in too much detail. We really didn't feel like we wanted to make the movie, "Is it or is it not?" We just wanted to say, "They believe this. Here's some information you need if you have basic questions about what they actually think, and then from there, we'll just go on to the community itself."

https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/qvxq3v/this-filmmaker-wants-us-to-take-flat-earthers-seriously?utm_campaign=sharebutton

CBC Radio (q) – April 26, 2018

Thursday, April 26, 2018: Meg Wolitzer, Jessica Leski

CBC Radio · April 26



Today on q: author Meg Wolitzer, author Justina Ireland, Nils Edenloff's Fort McMurray block party, filmmaker Jessica Leski. (Nina Subin, Vanessa Heins, Harper Collins Canada, jessicaleski.com.au)
Listen to the full episode 1:18:06

Today on *q*, with guest host Jael Richardson: (1) author Meg Wolitzer discusses her new novel *The Female Persuasion*, which deals with female mentorship, power, ambition and how a single encounter can forever change a person; (2) author Justina Ireland talks about the inspirations behind her post-American Civil War zombie tale, *Dread Nation*; (3) The Rural Alberta Advantage's Nils Edenloff shares his *q* block party dedicated to Fort McMurray, Alta; (4) filmmaker Jessica Leski takes us inside the fascinating world of boy band fangirls.

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/thursday-april-26-2018-meg-wolitzer-jessica-leski-1.4634950>

Hot Docs celebrates 25th anniversary



FEATURED LISTEN LIVE SHOWS CATEGORIES >



Here and Now Toronto with Gill Deacon



Hot Docs celebrates 25th anniversary

Apr 26, 2018

04:06

Shane Smith is the the director of programming for Hot Docs. The festival has come a long way from starting small to growing to North America's largest documentary festival. This year will feature almost 250 films from all over the world.

CATEGORIES

NEWS



8 films à ne pas manquer au festival Hot Docs 2018

Publié le jeudi 26 avril 2018 à 5 h 58 Mis à jour le 26 avril 2018 à 6 h 30



Photo extraite du film « Anote's Ark » Photo : « Anote's Ark », film de Matthieu Rytz

Le festival de documentaires Hot Docs atteint la parité cette année. Il laisse une place importante aux femmes devant et derrière la caméra. Un programme spécial est dédié aux *Silence Breakers*, celles qui ont brisé le silence.

Un texte de **Claudia Hébert**

Hot Docs 2018 en chiffres

- 25e année
- 246 films
- 16 projets multidisciplinaires
- Des oeuvres en provenance de 56 pays

Pour vous aider à faire des choix dans la vaste offre du festival, voici quelques recommandations de films à ne pas manquer.

MA GUERRE (My War) | Julien Fréchette | Canada



Image extraite du film « My War » Photo : « My War », film de Julien Fréchette

CBC Ici Radio Canada – April 26, 2018 (2 of 6)

On entend souvent parler de ceux qui partent au Moyen-Orient pour rejoindre le groupe armé État islamique. Mais qu'en est-il des volontaires qui désirent plutôt aller les combattre?

Une centaine d'Occidentaux ont fait le choix de se joindre aux efforts de l'armée kurde pour repousser les avancées des islamistes radicaux en Syrie et en Irak.

Finançant eux-mêmes leur voyage, ces combattants civils se jettent dans la mêlée et rêvent du front. Ils sont prêts à tout pour être envoyés et se battre en première ligne.

Le réalisateur Julien Fréchette a suivi sur le terrain quelques-uns de ces volontaires, dont deux Canadiens. Il sonde les motivations qui les amènent à risquer ainsi leur vie loin de chez eux.

TRANSFORMER | Michael Del Monte | Canada



« Transformer », un film de Michael Del Monte Photo : J.GLIESMAN

Matt « Kroc » Kroczaleski était un culturiste admiré. C'est un ex-marine détenteur de records en haltérophilie et de nombreux contrats de commandite lucratifs. Mais en 2015, la vérité est révélée : ce modèle de virilité est transgenre.

Banni des compétitions et abandonné par ses commanditaires, Matt décide d'embrasser sa vraie nature et de devenir Janae, la femme qu'il a toujours voulu être.

Sans sacrifier son imposante musculature, Janae porte maintenant au gym le maquillage, les perruques et les vêtements qui lui plaisent.

Soutenue par ses trois fils, Janae chemine dans cette transition physique et mentale pour enfin vivre sous sa vraie identité. Le film est courageux et plein de tendre vulnérabilité.

Of FATHERS AND SONS | Talal Derki | Syrie



Photo extraite du film « *Of Fathers and Sons* » Photo : « *Of Fathers and Sons* » film de Talal Derki

Le réalisateur syrien Talal Derki avait marqué le festival 2014 de Hot Docs avec son film coup de poing *The Return to Homs*. Il y dressait un portrait de la jeunesse combattant le gouvernement Assad tout au long de la destruction de la ville de Homs.

Cette année, Derki présente son nouveau film : *Of Fathers and Sons*. Ce documentaire est fraîchement couronné du prix du jury au festival de Sundance.

Ayant gagné la confiance d'une famille d'islamistes radicaux en Syrie, Derki a vécu auprès d'eux durant deux ans. Sa caméra capture toute la complexité de la relation entre le père, rêvant de rétablir un califat islamique, et ses deux fils de douze et treize ans, poussés hors de l'enfance et vers le Jihad.

Entre radicalisation et tendresse familiale, *Of Fathers and Sons* est une oeuvre unique, à la fois violente et intime, sur la fabrication de jeunes combattants.

ANOTE'S ARK | Matthieu Rytz | Canada



Photo extraite du film « *Anote's Ark* » Photo : « *Anote's Ark* », film de Matthieu Rytz

La République de Kiribati est une série d'archipels paradisiaques. Elle se trouve quelque part au milieu de l'océan Pacifique. Mais la population d'environ 115 000 habitants est menacée par les changements climatiques.

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Les îles, qui étaient autrefois protégées des ouragans, sont maintenant régulièrement prises d'assaut par de violentes tempêtes, laissant les modestes habitations dévastées et la terre inondée.

Chaque année, le niveau de l'océan monte. Il menace ces îles d'une complète disparition au cours des cent prochaines années.

Le réalisateur Matthieu Rytz témoigne de l'impact du climat sur Kiribati avec des images magnifiques de ces bouts de terre isolée. Bénéficiant d'un accès privilégié, il suit également Anote Tong, le président du pays. Ce dernier multiplie les initiatives afin de sensibiliser le monde au sort de sa population.

Anote's Ark est présenté dans la série *Big Ideas*. Il sera accompagné d'une soirée de conversation avec le réalisateur et Anote Tong. Le festival nous offre également une exposition de photographie autour du film et une expérience en réalité virtuelle, nous amenant directement à Kiribati.

GOLDEN DAWN GIRLS | Håvard Bustnes | Norvège

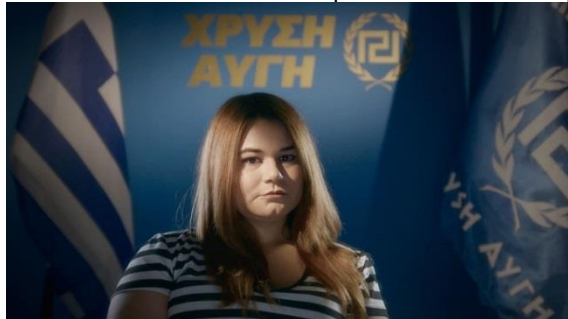


Photo extraite du film « Golden Dawn Girls » Photo : « Golden Dawn Girls », film de Håvard Bustnes

En Grèce, le parti néonazi Aube Dorée vit des moments difficiles quand les leaders de l'organisation sont tous emprisonnés pour activités criminelles. Trois femmes reprennent le flambeau et assurent la pérennité de l'oeuvre de leur père, mari ou fils.

En préparation des prochaines élections, ces femmes travaillent à propager les idées ultranationalistes du parti dont la popularité est en hausse.

Elles acceptent d'apparaître devant la caméra du cinéaste norvégien Håvard Bustnes, croyant pouvoir contrôler le message et faire du film *Golden Dawn Girls* un objet de propagande.

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Mais quand elles croient la caméra éteinte, les sombres coulisses d'un parti politique d'extrême droite se révèlent.

WHAT WALAA WANTS | Christy Garland | Canada, Danemark



Photo extraite du film « What Walaa Wants » Photo : « What Walaa Want », film de Christy Garland

Pendant huit ans, la jeune Walaa s'est occupée de ses frères et soeurs alors que sa mère était prisonnière politique en Israël.

À 15 ans, elle est enfin libre d'accomplir son rêve de rejoindre les forces armées palestiniennes, bien que l'académie policière n'accepte que très peu de filles. Mais une fois enrôlée, Walaa peine à suivre la discipline de l'institution et rechigne à l'entraînement.

Avec *What Walaa Wants*, la réalisatrice Christy Garland dresse le portrait du passage à l'âge adulte d'une adolescente palestinienne rebelle qui lutte pour se construire une vie à son image.

306 HOLLYWOOD | Elan Bogarín, Jonathan Bogarín | États-Unis

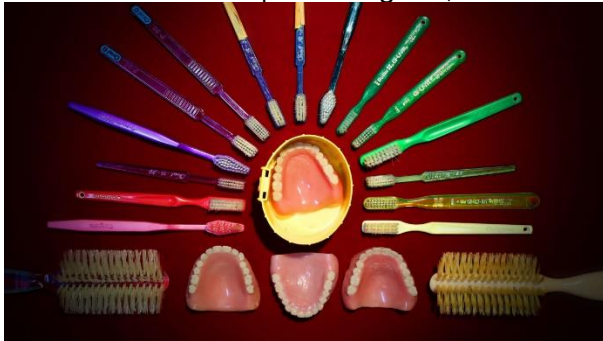


Photo extraite du film « 360 Hollywood » Photo : « 360 Hollywood », film d'Elan et Jonathan Bogarin

Pendant plus de 60 ans, la grand-mère d'Elan et de Jonathan Bogarin a vécu dans la même maison, au numéro 306 de la rue Hollywood.

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Avant sa mort, la soeur et le frère ont fait avec elle des dizaines d'entrevues pour mieux la connaître et préserver sa mémoire. Après son départ, ils décident de se donner une nouvelle mission : une fouille archéologique de sa maison pour en extirper les plus précieuses reliques!

Les meubles, papiers, objets et vêtements deviennent des artefacts de la vie de leur aïeule. Les deux cinéastes recréent même la maison sous forme de maison de poupée.

Avec ce documentaire, ils nous offrent le portrait coloré et ludique d'une femme qu'ils ont aimée.

PRIMAS | Laura Bari | Canada, Argentine



Photo extraite du film « Primas » Photo : « Primas », film de Laura Bari

Deux cousines, deux adolescentes comme les autres... ou presque. À 10 ans, Rocío a été violée, brûlée et laissée pour morte.

Pendant des années, Aldana a été agressée par son propre père. Résilientes, les deux jeunes filles se tournent aujourd'hui vers le théâtre, l'acrobatie et les arts de performance pour se libérer des actes de violence qui leur ont volé leur enfance.

Le film *Primas* de Laura Bari est présenté au sein du programme *Silence Breakers*.

Le 25e festival de documentaire Hot Docs se déroule **du 26 avril au 6 mai 2018**.

<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1097309/films-hot-docs-2018-selection-femmes>

15 Must See Documentaries from the Opening Weekend of Hot Docs' 25th Landmark Year

Andrew ParkerApril 26, 2018 8:59 amApril 26, 2018



Starting today and running until May 6th at a variety of Toronto area cinemas, the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival commemorates a landmark year. For twenty-five years, Hot Docs has committed to bringing together the best in non-fiction filmmaking from around the world for a ten day celebration of the form. Across fourteen eclectic, well curated programs, the festival will screen 246 feature, short, and mid-length documentaries from 56 different countries, with the festival achieving gender parity among presenting filmmakers for the first time in the festival's history.

There's never a shortage of quality documentaries to choose from on any given day of Hot Docs, with films and programs geared expressly towards nearly every cinematic taste, historical curiosity, or social issue. It's quite often a chance to see some of the year's most buzzworthy documentaries before their theatrical runs later in the year, but more often a great chance to see well made and researched passion projects and vital documents on the big screen that might not be seen in such a venue otherwise.

With that in mind, here's a look at fifteen, big name films and potentially hidden gems (in no particular order, but generally grouped together by the date of their first screening) that you're going to want to make time for at Hot Docs 2018 when they bow on the festival's milestone weekend.

Stay with us throughout the 2018 Hot Docs festival for daily dispatches, interviews, and looks at more films worth seeing that screen all the way up to the closing weekend.



The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution

This year's prominently programmed opening night film comes courtesy of veteran Canadian filmmaker and festival regular Maya Gallus, who returns to look at women in the service industry for the first time since her 2010 feature *Dish – Women, Waitressing, & the Art of Service*.

Turning her eye towards the back of the house, Gallus' latest looks at a cross section of women who head up kitchens in a managerial and ownership capacity in the largely testosterone driven restaurant industry. Showing on a business level that maintaining successful eateries is just as risky and fraught for women as their male counterparts, Gallus also deftly and empathetically showcases how much her subjects have sacrificed and subjected themselves to in a bid to live out their culinary dreams. More than just another "foodie doc," *The Heat* finds Gallus ditching loving shots of mouthwatering delicacies in favour of personal narratives of people overcoming patriarchal norms, bullying, and prejudices. If most men are exposed to cooking by women in their homes growing up, then why aren't more women chefs? It's certainly food for thought.

Screens

Thursday, April 26 – 9:30 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Saturday, April 27 – 1:15 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Sunday, May 6 – 3:30 pm – Isabel Bader Theatre



Three Identical Strangers

For his latest documentary, British filmmaker Tim Wardle looks back on a well documented and curious American “public interest story” from the 1980s that effortlessly blends hopeful uplift, unimaginable tragedy, and an incendiary expose of an unfathomable, long kept secret experiment that’s almost too sickening to be believed. At the start of the decade and via an unbelievable, life altering coincidence that’s impossible to make up, New Yorkers Robert Shafran and Edward Galland – both of whom were adopted – learned that they were long lost identical twins. When the local media starts spinning this story of long lost brothers into an uplifting puff piece, they discover the existence of a third identical brother, David Kellerman, living in the same city. The discovery and surrounding media interest brings these men closer together (and eventually further apart over time), but once they start asking why an adoption agency would break up a set of identical triplets in the first place, the brothers uncover a startling conspiracy at the heart of one of New York’s most supposedly reputable Jewish adoption agencies. Wardle doesn’t have to embellish the stories of these men at all, letting the facts and recollections of those willing to talk about what happen shine above any and all previous coverage of the case. Those familiar with the story of the triplets will find plenty to be shocked and moved by in *Three Identical Strangers*, and those with no knowledge of the familial break-up and continuing fall out will be blown away and left with plenty to think about.

Screens

Thursday, April 26 – 6:30 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Friday, April 27 – 1:30 pm – Scotiabank Theatre 4

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The End of Fear

Even if abstract painting isn't your cup of cultural tea, artist and filmmaker Barbara Visser's Dutch documentary *The End of Fear* uses creative techniques, pointed re-creations of events, and non-traditional gumshoe movie tropes to cut to the heart of artistic jealousy and unconstructive criticism. In 1986, the art world was stunned when a valuable, massive, but colourfully minimalist abstract painting from American artist Barnett Newman was slashed and virtually destroyed by a disgruntled fellow painter brandishing a box cutter at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum. A conversation wasn't only sparked about differing artistic styles and cultural merits of the work, but also about the delicate and often subjective nature of restoring such a work and the legal matters and in fighting that would unexpectedly arise. Visser cleverly recreates the events along a literal and visual timeline, while also asking a willing painter to foolheartedly attempt a re-imagining of Newman's seemingly simple, but astoundingly complex work. Whether one finds the painting in question – titled "Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue III" – to be all that much to look at is immaterial, but just as people will look into Newman's art and see many different things and experience many potentially conflicting emotions, Visser's film shows how a work of art can reflect some of the art world's darker professional proclivities.

Screens

Thursday, April 26 – 6:45 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 4

Friday, April 27 – 4:15 pm – Scotiabank Theatre 4

Friday, May 4 – 6:45 pm – Fox Theatre



I Used to Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story

Admit it: at one point in our lives, we've probably liked at least one song from a musical act that could be classified as a "boy band," a group of good looking lads thrust together by record producers or keen eyed promoters that were designed to move CDs, sell loads of merchandise, make teens swoon, and sing ditties about love, desire, and being young. Australian filmmaker Jessica Leski travels the world to look at boy band hysteria from the perspective of those either currently in the throes of such a mass marketed, but joy inducing addiction to a musical act and those who unapologetically look back on their allegiance to groups like The Beatles, Take Five, and Backstreet Boys with emotional fondness and clearer sensibilities. *I Used to Be Normal* has clearly been cut down from a much larger, sprawling potential project (which isn't surprising given just how many musical acts could fall under such a classification across history), but Leski has whittled her potentially daunting material into an exceptional cross section of personal experiences that reflect on how women of different cultural backgrounds can find different forms of emotional and hormonal catharsis through their fandom. It's a lovely work that wears its heart firmly on its sleeve, but also a fascinating bit of musical and cultural scholarship.

Screens

Thursday, April 26 – 9:15 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Friday, April 27 – 12:00 pm – Hart House Theatre

Friday, May 4 – 9:30 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Sunday, May 6 – 12:30 pm – Hart House Theatre



Death By Popcorn: The Tragedy of the Winnipeg Jets

Screening in the festival's Redux section of classic documentaries (with all of this year's selections comprised of Canadian efforts), *Death By Popcorn* is well worth seeking out based on the curiosity factor, strength of the material, and the likelihood that viewers probably won't get a chance to see it again for quite some time. Mired in legal controversies and copyright issues since it's intended production for television in 2006, this unlikely collaboration between emerging filmmaker and visual artist Matthew Rankin (currently a luminary in the Canadian short film world), fellow Winnipeg filmmaker Mike Maryniuk, and archivist Walter Forsberg cheekily and poignantly looks at their home city's fraught, but loving relationship to their one major sports franchise. Considering that the Jets have done pretty well this season and the city's relationship is a bit more stable since their return, the artfully composed *Death By Popcorn* as aged wonderfully and only grows in resonance. It's just a shame that this will likely be the only chance to see this one in a local theatre for decades to come. As an added bonus, the film is paired with an equally curious CBC produced short *World Famous Gopher Hole Museum*, a similarly contemplative and subtle look at Torrington, Alberta's most notable and unusual tourist attraction.

Screens

Friday, April 28 – 12:00 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 3



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Take Light

After being shortlisted for a Best Documentary Short Oscar in 2017, Canadian-Nigerian filmmaker Shasha Nakhai returns to her industrial minded hometown of Port Harcourt, Nigeria for her debut feature, *Take Light*, an on-the-ground look at how one of the world's biggest gas producing countries somehow inexplicably doesn't have the infrastructure or resources to supply over half of its population with consistent electrical power. Nakhai returns to Port Harcourt at a formative time for the country. While the once corrupt and ineffective state run power company has become privatized and switched to a more efficient, ethical, and structurally sound ways of conducting business, workers for the company still face scars, prejudices, and anger from overtaxed, everyday people who still see those providing (and in some cases taking away) electricity as being evil. *Take Light* not only looks at the human side and emotional strains of a messy situation where an entire community is being taken advantage of by the same greedy industry, but also a potentially prescient look at where many fossil fuel dependent countries could be heading in the not too distant future.

Screens

Friday, April 27 – 6:45 pm – Hart House Theatre

Tuesday, May 1 – 3:15 pm – Scotiabank 3

Thursday, May 3 – 6:30 pm – Scotiabank 3



Mercury 13

With *Mercury 13*, filmmakers David Sington and Heather Walsh look back on a branch of aviation and aerospace history that has been unfairly scrubbed and overlooked in the record books simply because it involved a lot of badass women working in an industry dominated by fragile male egos in the 1950s and 60s. Once the space race kicked off and NASA became desperate to compete with the Russians, there was a scramble to find worthy pilots physically, mentally, and technically capable of travelling into space. Part of this search for the best and

The Gate – April 26, 2018 (8 of 14)

brightest of the aviation world included a sizable number of female pilots, many of whom were either competing in air shows, honing their craft on the racing circuit, or working in the military in non-combat capacities. But once test results started showing that many of these female pilots were testing better than their male counterparts, powers that be at the highest levels of government began to scuttle the results of these hard working and deserving women who were essentially screwed out of their shot at historical recognition. Told through the perspective of many who went through the program, who hold both love in their hearts for those who supported them along the way and rightful disdain for those who held them down, *Mercury 13* finally gives these women their rightful due.

Screens

Friday, April 27 – 6:30 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Saturday, April 28 – 10:45 am – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Saturday, May 5 – 6:30 pm – Isabel Bader Theatre

Sunday, May 6 – 5:45 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1



Transformer

An intimate and insightful look into a manly powerlifter, former U.S. Marine, and father of three transitioning into womanhood, *Transformer* never shies away from big emotions and the questions faced by many transgender people going through similar life changes. As Matt “Kroc” Kroczaleski embarks on a journey to living a better life as Janae, she’s forced to confront hard questions about her past and future. Janae and filmmaker Michael Del Monte offer viewers an unprecedented, warts and all look at the transitioning process and the deep, sometimes conflicted feelings that someone uncomfortable in their birth skin experiences along the way. Janae is a welcome, open, and kind guide to this world, and watching her struggle through the process is more inspirational and valuable to society than any number of benchpresses or squats. This should be required viewing for anyone trying to better understand the sometimes crippling emotional weight of body dysmorphia.

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Screens

Friday, April 27 – 6:00 pm – Scotiabank 3

Sunday, April 29 – 12:30 pm – Scotiabank 3

Thursday, May 3 – 8:15 pm – Scotiabank 13



Don't Be Nice

Moving and swaggering like an inspirational sports flick, director Max Powers' *Don't Be Nice* might be the most entertaining, uplifting, and timely film about poetry ever made. The film follows the Bowery Slam Poetry Team, a group of five poets (all of whom are people of colour or queer) and their equally passionate coach, as they try to make a name for themselves and produce material that passionately and sometimes confrontationally speaks to their personal experiences. Eloquently and artfully showcasing the hard work these poets put into their pursuits while also remaining thoroughly rousing and engaging throughout, it's proof positive that great poetry doesn't have to hold anyone's hand or tap dance around difficult subject matter to make a mark on the listener.

Screens

Friday, April 27 – 9:15 pm – Isabel Bader Theatre

Saturday, April 28 – 12:30 pm – Hart House Theatre

Friday, May 1 – 3:30 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Saturday, May 5 – 10:00 am – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

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Alt-Right: Age of Rage

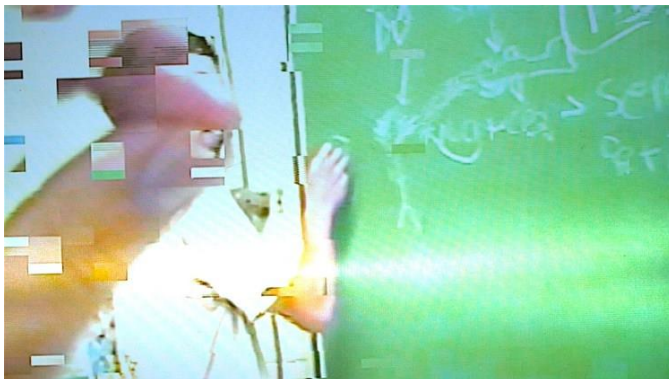
A well rounded primer on the current extremes of American political culture, director Adam Bhala Lough's *Alt-Right: Age of Rage* looks at the rising of extreme conservative factions, their leaders, and those seeking to righteously oppose them. Lough predominantly follows far-right blogger and blowhard Richard Spencer and anti-fascist leader Daryle Lamont Jenkins, with both functioning as open guides to their markedly different ideologies. Clearly not on Spencer's side (and really, what rational thinking person should be?), Lough is careful enough to spell out the far right point of view before analyzing and picking it apart. Showing why people like Spencer need to be confronted and refuted before their gospel of white superiority spreads, it takes a look at American divisiveness head-on and without fear, building to an on-the-ground look at the deadly and violent 2017 clash between the Alt-Right, antifa, and largely uncaring police in Charlottesville. One gets the sense that Lough might have been hoping for different results and confrontations than the ones he ultimately captured through his footage and interviews, but that doesn't make the final results any less potent to behold.

Screens

Friday, April 27 – 9:30 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Saturday, April 28 – 1:15 pm – Isabel Bader Theatre

Friday, May 4 – 3:45 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema



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1999

Sixteen years removed from a rash of teen suicides that rocked a small, close knit community just outside Moncton, New Brunswick, filmmaker Samara Grace Chadwick returns to her hometown to look at the healing process in the stunningly visual and deeply cathartic *1999*. While there were always clues and warning signs (all in hindsight) that something was troubling teens in the local high school, mismanagement from school officials further distanced those who might have needed genuine help from possibly coming forward to get it. Sitting down and talking with those who lived through the tragedies and ensuing media circus – both in one-on-one settings and groups – Chadwick offers those still alive and viewers alike with a healing look at unspeakable loss and the power that comes from remembering that no one person is ever truly alone in the world.

Screens

Saturday, April 28 – 3:15 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 3

Sunday, April 29 – 8:30 pm – Scotiabank Theatre 3

Friday, May 4 – 4:00 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 3



Chef Flynn

A world renowned chef from the age of ten, teenager Flynn McGarry has been profiled more in *The New York Times* and covered more by culinary tastemakers than most cooks (and definitely many teenagers) will be in their lives. Director Cameron Yates follows along with Flynn as he struggles to deal with critics who suggest he's a gimmick who bought his way into a notoriously snobbish industry without paying any professional dues and observes the pressure of trying to take his culinary game to the next level. *Chef Flynn* has a fascinating and somewhat controversial figurehead at the centre of everything: a passionate, knowledgeable young man pushing his dreams as far as possible. But the real backbone of Yates' work comes from

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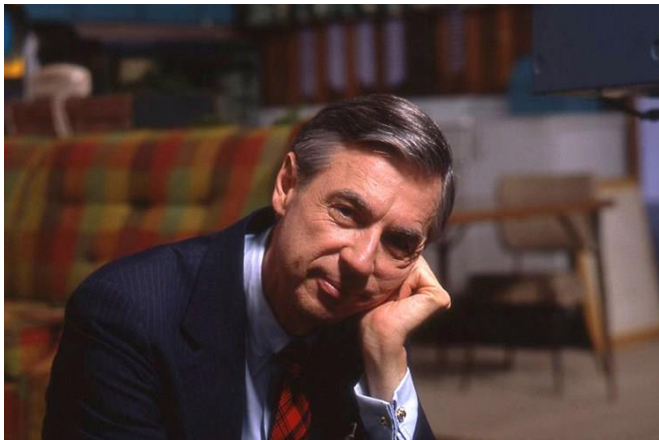
watching the supportive, but sometimes contentious relationship Flynn has with his mother-slash-manager, a former filmmaker who seems to sometimes want the spotlight more than her low-key son does. It's an undercurrent of familial tension that adds a considerable amount of spice to an already admirably constructed dish.

Screens

Saturday, April 28 – 6:45 pm – Isabel Bader Theatre

Sunday, April 29 – 10:45 am – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Saturday, May 5 – 1:15 pm – Isabel Bader Theatre



Won't You Be My Neighbor?

Possibly the documentary with a bigger mainstream buzz than any other seeing a release this year, it's a pleasure to report that award winning filmmaker Morgan Neville's look behind the scenes of former ordained minister turned beloved television personality Fred Rogers' educational and game changing public television series. Sure to elicit more than a few tears from just the inclusion of the first tinkling notes of the *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood* theme song alone, Neville's warm, insightful, and never overly nostalgic or bogged down in minutiae *Won't You Be My Neighbor* brings Rogers' good hearted personality to roaring life. When he left television for good and after he passed away, Rogers' memory left a void of goodness, charity, equity, and understanding in the world, but Neville's film is powerful enough to stand as a testament to the man for decades to come.

Screens

Saturday, April 28 – 6:30 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Sunday, April 29 – 1:00 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

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Sunday, May 6 – 12:45 pm – Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema



Love, Scott

A work of pure, unabashed love and kindness in the face of a violent act, Laura Marie Wayne's look at her wheelchair bound best friend in *Love, Scott* will leave some purposefully enraged, but also filled with hope for the future. Scott Jones, a gay musician from New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, lost the use of his legs following a brutal stabbing and attack outside a club. While the perpetrator of the crime was convicted and sentenced to prison (although the stabbing was never prosecuted as the hate crime it obviously was), the road to physical and mental recovery for Scott and his friends and family remains long and emotionally taxing. Although Scott seems to be faring somewhat better considering what he's been through, Wayne is able to get to the emotional root of her friend's life by simply letting her subject tell his own story in unbroken, unwavering, gorgeously photographed takes that allows catharsis to come naturally and patiently instead of forcing something or editing around it. Scott's story is a vital and inspiring one for all Canadians to hear, but the way Wayne has allowed her subject to tell it is just as revolutionary and noteworthy.

Screens

Saturday, April 8 – 6:30 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

Sunday, April 29 – 10:15 am – Isabel Bader Theatre

Thursday, May 3 – 9:15 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

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United We Fan

Canadian filmmaker Michael Sparaga takes a deep dive into the world of dedicated fans in the disarmingly insightful documentary *United We Fan*. Sparaga looks across the history of television and seeks out the intrepid men and women behind campaigns to save their beloved series from cancellation. From *Star Trek* and *Cagney & Lacey* to *Chuck* and *Veronica Mars*, Sparaga hits upon every major series to mount an unlikely fan driven comeback, but instead of just resting on a bunch of pop culture high notes, his film functions as a plea for more inclusivity and representation on television. When Sparaga follows a young, queer women trying to save the show *Person of Interest* – a series that featured a gay character in a positive light – and the betrayal she feels when they show takes an unexpected turn, the message comes home wonderfully. But the most fascinating bit of pop culture scholarship contained within Sparaga's film is an oral history of the often overlooked Viewers for Quality Television, a group of television buffs that banded together under the guidance of a school teacher from Michigan to keep quality shows on the air. It's a fun film to watch, but also one that makes us question how far we're all willing to go to save our favourite series from extinction, and where the future of such fan campaigns might be going from here.

Screens

Saturday, April 28 – 5:30 pm – Scotiabank 4

Monday, April 30 – 3:00 pm – Hart House Theatre

Thursday, May 3 – 12:15 pm – Hart House Theatre

For a full list of films screening, showtimes, tickets, and more information, please visit hotdocs.ca.

https://app.meltwater.com/mwTransition/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thegate.ca%2Ffilm%2F033446%2F15-must-see-documentaries-from-the-opening-weekend-of-hot-docs-25th-landmark-year%2F&uid=581111b8b9279d1cac2cf198&cId=56fd89686a94fd326e811d9a&dId=jXruVwmoHZHGvV3sBmKIfmhRvB0&contextId=5ae476b8f5e29b02480df074&op=open&sentiment=N&isHosted=false&publishTime=1524747575207&id=&name=&type=&transitionToken=eyJ0eXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzUxMiJ9.eyJ0bmFtZSI6Ind3dy50aGVnYXRILmNhln0.QW2BNxOwpVxYJQi5oWKp911qLz3n948ZxcPk1QPUHY-X4vV0sadyEC_OIGzK2z_UiF2Chhp2OuOBKYw8PJRHXa&s=mail-newsletter

Hot Docs' march toward gender parity

The festival's team digs into hitting the milestone and pushing the #TimesUp conversation with its programming.

By Lauren Malyk

April 26, 2018

With 262 projects set to screen at Hot Docs 2018, the festival has reached an important milestone to mark its 25th anniversary – gender parity.

Fully 50% of the directors with films at Hot Docs are women. While the Toronto documentary organization has been inching closer to parity in recent years (most recently hitting 48% in 2017), director of programming Shane Smith told *Playback Daily* that reaching that milestone has been a somewhat organic process.

“We knew it would be a nice achievement if we could get there, but we weren’t forcing ourselves to program films we didn’t think should be in the festival or we didn’t feel were telling the stories that we loved. But as we looked at the work, it just became clear that there was so much great work being done by female filmmakers,” said Smith.

Kicking off the fest’s opening night in the Special Presentations program is Maya Gallus’ *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* (pictured), a doc centred on seven female chefs climbing the ranks in the traditionally male-dominated world of the cooking industry. Gallus is no stranger to the fest – the documentary filmmaker was honoured with a retrospective in 2017 and *The Heat* was named a Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund recipient earlier in February.

For Smith, Gallus’ female-fronted doc was the right project to set the tone for the 2018 festival.

“[*The Heat*] works as a great culinary documentary, but it also has a social conscience that it brings to the table as well – no pun intended,” said Smith, who also called the doc “powerful, smart and intelligent.”

While it was an organic process, achieving parity this year sends an important message at a time when the industry is being forced to confront its treatment of women. Given the wave of women who continue to speak up about their experiences with harassment and unequal treatment, Smith noted that the festival saw a surge in the number of submissions addressing those topics.

This prompted the festival’s organizers to add the Silence Breakers program, which spotlights “brave women speaking up and being heard.” Presented in partnership with Oxfam, the three-pronged program is composed of discussion panels, a shorts section and a lineup of features.

Feature docs in the Silence Breakers program include Margarita Cardenas’ *Women of the Venezuelan Chaos* (France); *Primas* from director Laura Bari (Canada/Argentina); the world premiere of director Kelly Showker’s *Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial* (Canada); director Sarah Menzies’ *Afghan Cycles* (U.S.); the North American premiere of *A Thousand Girls Like Me* from director Sahra Mosawi (France/Afghanistan); director Irene Lusztig’s *Yours in*

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Sisterhood (U.S.); and the international premieres of Cynthia Lowen's *Netizens* (U.S.), Nancy Schwartzman's *Roll Red Roll* (U.S.), Harriet Hiroshorn's *Nothing Without Us: the Women Will End Aids* (U.S.) and Norah Shapiro's *Time for Ilhan* (U.S.).

Hot Docs has also programmed a number of industry events dedicated to highlighting women's voices, including Now What, Documentarians?: Beyond #MeToo; In Conversation events with Barbara Kopple and Cara Mertes, among others.

All told, 52 of 73 industry programming speakers are women, with 18 of 22 sessions moderated by women.

Hot Docs industry programmer, conference and funds, Olena Decock told *Playback Daily* that the festival's film and industry programming both aim to raise women's voices and spark discussion.

"Programming two conversations – one for the public, one for the industry – regarding issues of power imbalances, sexual violence and the disempowerment of women, is a way to signal that we don't think the work begun by the Silence Breakers is over," she said.

Building on these issues of power imbalance, the festival recently announced Barry Avrich's follow-up Harvey Weinstein doc, **The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret** will make its world premiere in the Special Presentations program.

Produced by Melissa Hood, the doc is an update to Avrich's 2010 doc *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project*, which examined the producer's career. In contrast, *The Reckoning* begins with Weinstein heading to rehab, as well as documenting events taking place in the aftermath of the allegations made against him.

Smith says Hot Docs knew Avrich was working on the project and that as soon as they heard it was ready, they pounced on the opportunity to add it to the 2018 lineup.

"I think it's part of the effort to make sure that conversation doesn't go away – that these discussions don't disappear," he said.

Thinking ahead to next year, Smith reiterated that the festival will continue to seek out diverse voices with unique stories from around the world.

"Over half of our audience is female, and we intend to continue to bring our audience the best female-directed documentaries being made today. We will continue to ask sales agents and distributors for female-directed documentaries, and Hot Docs will continue to focus on supporting diverse voices through our training and funding programs," he said.

Hot Docs runs from April 26 to May 6.

Shane Smith: 5 must-see showings at the Hot Docs Festival

Shane Smith is the Hot Docs director of programming

Opinion Apr 26, 2018 Toronto.com



Hot Docs director of programming Shane Smith. - Hot Docs/photo

There are plenty of films to catch at the Hot Docs festival, but even the most avid cinephile could be hard-pressed to pick and choose which to see. Here are five recommendations from Hot Docs director of programming, Shane Smith.



Postings from Home: A live slideshow by filmmaker Kelly O'Brien, this event celebrates the everyday, bringing together memories, musings and images culled from social media that examine everything from motherhood to the uncertain times in which we live. (Thursday, May 3, 7 p.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre)



Primas: An in-depth look at the impacts of sexual violence on two teens who rely on one another and a shared loved of acrobatics and the arts to heal and cope with the trauma they have faced. Directed by Argentine-Canadian filmmaker Laura Bari. (Wednesday, May 2, 8:45 p.m. at the Scotiabank Theatre, Friday, May 4, 6 p.m. at the TIFF Bell Lightbox)



Mr. Fish: Cartooning from the Deep End: A look at controversial political cartoonist Mr. Fish (Dwayne Booth) as he works to maintain a career and his integrity in an era where print media is struggling and Donald Trump is president. Directed by Pablo Bryant. (Sunday, April 29, 9:15 p.m. at the Scotiabank Theatre, Tuesday, May 1, 10:15 a.m. at the TIFF Bell Lightbox, Sunday, May 6, 6:30 p.m. at Hart House Theatre)



Bisbee '17: A look at the quirky Arizona town of Bisbee, a former mining town that went through massive labour strife and is now essentially a ghost town inhabited by unique characters. A Sundance hit directed by Robert Greene. (Friday, April 27, 2:45 p.m. at Hart House Theatre,

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Monday, April 30, 11:30 a.m. at the Scotiabank Theatre, Friday, May 4, 5 p.m. at the Scotiabank Theatre)



The Return: Two Danish-Korean adoptees search for their birth mothers in Seoul, struggling in the process to come to terms with their identity and the dual cultures they call their own. Directed by Malene Choi Jensen. (Monday, April 30, 9:15 p.m. at Hart House Theatre, Wednesday, May 2, 3 p.m. at Hart House Theatre, Sunday, May 6, 6:15 p.m. at the Scotiabank Theatre)

<https://www.toronto.com/opinion-story/8570450-shane-smith-5-must-see-showings-at-the-hot-docs-festival/>

Ain't that America: The Films of Barbara Kopple

An appreciation of Hot Docs' Outstanding Achievement Retrospective recipient

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 26th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Harlan County USA

Courtesy of Film Struck (the film is available on Film Struck in the USA)

“Only in America, in a free democracy like America, would it have been possible to make a film like *American Dream*,” said producer Arthur Cohen while accepting the Oscar for *American Dream* in 1991. “I feel today, more than ever, the free world owes the United States of America deep respect and everlasting gratitude.”

Standing beside Cohen and nodding all the while was *American Dream* director Barbara Kopple. Should Kopple win another Oscar within the next few years, one wonders if she would repeat Cohen’s words. Perhaps she might. There are few flattering portraits of the United States at Hot Docs this year, but some of the most vital and useful are in the Kopple retrospective. Her films offer tough but patriotic portraits of a complicated nation.



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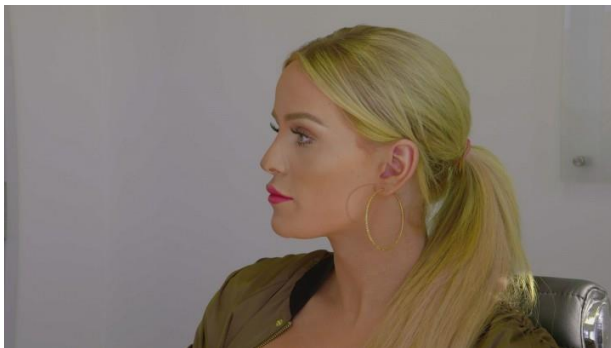
Barbara Kopple
Courtesy of Hot Docs

Barbara Kopple, this year's Outstanding Achievement Retrospective recipient at Hot Docs, has always made films that encapsulate the contradictory greatness of the United States. Her roots in verité imbue her work with the power of observation. Kopple's films give voice to Americans who are silenced by the establishment and the status quo. They invite audiences to find empathy by seeing the world from another's perspective. Her films show that a nation isn't defined by the person or party in power, but by the everyday people working together to ensure the American dream isn't reserved for a lucky few.

Kopple's story is one of grassroots style and participatory filmmaking. What best defines her work is the astonishing range of access she gets to her subjects and the intimate environments she creates. This facet starts with her early Oscar winners *Harlan County, USA* and *American Dream* where she entered the homes and lives of the people whose stories she filmed. Despite gaining a reputation as a savvy fundraising, Kopple's filmmaker diaries are accounts of the documentarians' vow of poverty—stories of single-digit account balances, blackouts, and shoots saved by credit cards—and, in one case, Bruce Springsteen. This spirit, particularly in the story of the miners' strike in *Harlan County, USA*, ensures that the work resonates with the hardship the subjects endured.



Shut Up and Sing
Hot Docs



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This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous

Cabin Creek Films

Even in her late career shift towards music docs and celebrity portraiture, Kopple's work remains quietly political. Films like *Shut Up and Sing* and *Miss Sharon Jones!* transcend the populist appeal of music docs by looking beyond the success stories of their subjects and finding greater interest in the social forces that fuel the musicians' fires. The accessibility of these stories is often intertwined within the power of music used so effectively in Kopple's films. Her work registers as powerful emotionally as it does intellectually, and perhaps that accounts for its longevity. One leaves each film invigorated to make the world a better place. Hot Docs offers a sextet of Kopple classics as part of this year's Outstanding Achievement Award retrospective: *Harlan County, USA*; *A Conversation with Gregory Peck*; *Shut Up and Sing*; *Running from Crazy*; *Miss Sharon Jones!* and a mystery selection by the director herself. The five films are great choices for viewers to discover Kopple's hand at verité, her activist spirit, adept portraiture, and the emotional resonance she imbues in each work, but the selections are also the titles of her filmography that one can see easily outside the festival. Some of her best films, like *American Dream*, *Wild Man Blues*, and *My Generation*, are hard to find. One hopes this long-overdue retrospective inspires more distributors to support her work and more festivals to show her older doc classics.

Here are some highlights from Kopple's filmography that make her a worthy choice for this year's Outstanding Achievement Award:

Winter Soldier (1972)

Kopple was part of the Winterfilm collective that shared directing credits on this difficult documentation of the 1971 Winter Soldier hearings in Detroit. The doc, overlooked at the time but re-released and re-appraised in 2005, gave the USA a portrait of the war effort it didn't want to see, but desperately needed to view and process at that time. Kopple and company filmed the testimonies of 30 Vietnam veterans, including future Secretary of State John Kerry, as they unburdened themselves of the atrocities committed by American soldiers against the Vietnamese. *Winter Soldier*, difficult to watch even 50 years after its production, offered gut-wrenching accounts of civilians maimed, raped, tortured, and executed in brutal acts of senseless violence. Equally disturbing were the soldiers' recollections of dehumanization tactics used to characterize all Vietnamese as the enemy "other." Shot in inky black and white, the frank and sobering style of *Winter Soldier* found the right counter-culture voice to tell the survivors' stories: by unmasking the image of the all-American hero and seeing the wounded soul underneath.

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Harlan County, USA (1976)

Barbara Kopple's invigorating solo directorial debut *Harlan County, USA* introduced a brilliant voice for verité. Immersing herself within the community of Kentucky coal miners going on strike against the Duke Power Company, Kopple brought her camera to the front lines of a tense stand-off between the haves and the have nots. Much has been written of the violence Kopple experienced during the film, and one can't forget the image of a Duke goon pointing a gun at the crew while the director's voice screamed "Don't shoot!" from off-camera, but that is simply one facet of the doc's astonishing fearlessness. The film didn't give both sides of the story and it didn't have to, for the powers at Duke already got their fill in the mainstream media. Kopple instead created an air of objectivity by capturing the plight of the miners from a variety of perspectives. In addition to the men, *Harlan County* gave equal weight to the wives of the miners, who fought boldly on the picket lines and squabbled at meetings in-between.

The power of the film is best encapsulated in a scene in which 73-year-old singer Florence Reece rallied the troops at a town hall with a gravelly rendition of her labour ballad "Which Side Are You On?." The song, one of many folk tunes that peppered the soundtrack, evoked an enduring spirit of Americana that let the film resonate with each fight to come. Kopple chose her side and *Harlan County, USA* was all the better for it. *Harlan County* is not only Kopple's best film, it's, in my opinion, the best documentary ever made. [Pick up a copy of the [new issue of POV](#) to read an in-depth reflection on *Harlan County, USA* by Liam Lacey.]

American Dream (1990)

If *Harlan County, USA* is folk music, *American Dream* is Springsteen. Kopple followed *Harlan County* with a portrait of labour and the working class in *American Dream* that echoed the plight of the miners as it witnessed the meatpackers at a Hormel Foods factory in Austin, Minnesota. This strike marched into frigid winter when the brass cut workers' wages despite an increase in profitability. Kopple portrayed the dissolution of the unions' strength by observing three complementary but distinct narrative threads as the workforce found itself at odds with its elected representatives in addition to the executives who forced them to picket in the cold. Through these layers, the film saw the erosion of the union's power and the division of the community. If the in-fighting of *Harlan County* was dramatic, the fissures between union members of *American Dream* proved explosive while capturing the devastating impact of Reagan-era economics on the working class. The emotions became charged when hope grew as cold as the Minnesota winter and, in a disarming moment, Kopple's camera was privileged to sit at the kitchen table with a few salt-of-the-earth meatpackers as they shed tears and weighed their need to feed their families with the price of crossing the picket line. Again embedding herself within the homes and lives of the subjects whose story she presented, Kopple asked how the democratic spirit of organized labour could withstand the nation's pursuit of unfettered capitalism.



American Dream
Wild Man Blues (1997)

Any Woody Allen fan is bound to love the power of music as the Woodman sways playing his clarinet in Kopple's behind-the-scenes flick *Wild Man Blues*. The doc followed Allen on a whirlwind European tour as he played blues and jazz for delighted audiences—and escaped media scrutiny over his notorious relationship with ex-girlfriend Mia Farrow's adopted daughter Soon-Yi Previn. Kopple didn't take sides once again but simply observed the relationship between Allen and Previn, including his off-colour jokes about her teenage friends and her childhood spent eating garbage in Korea. More significantly, *Wild Man Blues* offered the first chance for audiences to listen to Ms. Previn speak. Kopple's doc afforded her agency that mainstream news outlets did not. Previn, despite her youthfulness, often appeared to be the more mature member of the couple, as in one scene where she taught Allen the value of thanking his band at the end of the show—a gesture he hadn't even considered and failed to make after his next performance.

The objective power of verité-style filmmaking found one of its best examples in Kopple's observation of the relationship that let viewers decide the ick factor for themselves. One couldn't help but laugh in the film's climax when Kopple witnessed the “dinner from hell” as Allen visited his parents, who insisted that his career would have been better spent in pharmaceuticals. Allen's mother lamented his choice to date an Asian woman rather than a “nice Jewish girl,” but made no quip over Previn's much younger age. The scene provided a great snapshot of the home that produced Allen's neurotic comedy. *Wild Man Blues* offered a hilariously uncomfortable portrait of an icon in all his complexity.

A Conversation with Gregory Peck (1999)

Kopple profiled another icon of American cinema two years later as she filmed actor Gregory Peck on an in-conversation tour across the country. Peck, best known for his iconic and Oscar-winning performance as Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, carried himself in Kopple's verité with the same dignity and grace that defined his star persona. In Peck, just as in Atticus Finch, Kopple found

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an embodiment of all-American values and goodwill as he regaled the audience both onstage and offstage with stories about his life on screen. The doc affectionately let audiences into the lives of one of Hollywood's favourite actors and challenged the idea that people shouldn't meet their heroes. Sometimes the ideal could be real.

My Generation (2000)

The hidden gem of the Kopple canon is her expansive chronicling of Woodstock in *My Generation*. Kopple's doggedness for keeping the cameras rolling regardless of funding came in handy when Polygram brought her on to film its 1994 reboot of Woodstock but then "got cold feet," as Kopple said, and tried to stop the shoot. Any delay in the production was in her favour, though, since Kopple then shot the last Woodstock of the Millennium in 1999 and captured the seismic shifts in cultural values encapsulated by the all-out bastardization of the-once groovy fest. This sweeping tapestry wove the social history of music and Americana by cross-cutting archival footage of the 1969 Woodstock concert and the 25th anniversary effort that tried to re-capture the magic for a new generation. What Kopple found, however, was a change in tune for Woodstock as corporate culture overwhelmed the concert with sponsorship, merchandise, prohibitively expensive tickets and concessions, and an overall jaded attitude. Where Woodstock once embodied the way-out hopefulness of free love and idealism, the concert morphed from acoustic lovefest to plugged-in rage against the machine. American youths came looking for solace from the fast-paced consumer culture their parents created and found no escape.

Shut Up and Sing (2006)

There are two great documentaries from the Bush years that capture the politics and spirit of the era: Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* and Kopple's *Shut Up and Sing*. This remarkable film went behind the scenes with the Dixie Chicks when they fell from the top of the charts after singer Natalie Maines joked in a London concert that she was ashamed that the President of the United States was from Texas. The film watched as fans, nudged by the alt-right group The New Republic, charged the all-American girls with treason via trial by media. Radio stations encouraged fans to burn their Dixie Chicks albums, yet the doc witnessed the band hit new creative heights by channelling the experience, which included legitimate death threats against Maines, into music.

It is crazy how well *Shut Up and Sing* anticipated the polarity of Donald Trump's America. A revisit to the film in 2018 brought chills with its story of the power of the alt-right using sensational rhetoric and the guise of patriotism to silence democracy. Even before the toxicity of Twitter, hate

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for the Chicks fuelled all-American rage. But in cross-cutting the nightmare of 2003 with scenes of the band's 2005 renaissance, Kopple and co-director Cecilia Peck (Gregory's daughter) ensured that the positive power of free speech ultimately spoke louder than the voices who sought to silence the band. *Shut Up and Sing* became more relevant than ever as time passed with its buoyant, anthemic message about the virtues of a country in which people can debate their ideals and become stronger together.

Running from Crazy (2013)

Some critics cynically dismissed *Running from Crazy* as mere stargazing with its glimpse into the public and private life of actress Mariel Hemingway and her family's history of suicide, including her famous grandfather, Ernest. However, while *Running from Crazy* offered a sunny and balanced portrait of Hemingway, it really delivered a disarming look at the ways mental illness can impact a family. Kopple mined the rich archive of Hemingway lore to unearth audio interviews of Mariel's sister Margaux, a superstar model/actress who tragically took her own life at age 46, and revealed through interviews the younger sister's indifference towards her sibling during her lifetime. The doc offered an invaluable intimate study on the possibility to escape such a cycle of despair by showing Hemingway's willingness to speak openly about her past and encourage others to do the same.

Miss Sharon Jones! (2015)

Kopple found the best subject in her streak of celebrity portraits with the late soul sister Sharon Jones. The doc went behind the scenes with Jones's late-breaking career to show how hard it is for a woman to make it in show business when she defies the conventional model for being petite, blond, and white. *Miss Sharon Jones!* sang with lust for life as Jones belted out numbers by night and endured treatment for cancer by day, and Kopple's verité eye never wavered while another part of her body was tapping its toes. Cancer was just another knock for Sharon Jones after being told she was "too fat, too black, and too short" to make it in entertainment. The film showed a life well-lived in its observation of her determination and tenacity to claim the spotlight her talent deserved.

This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous (2017)

Four decades after *Harlan County, USA* Kopple delivered not one but two films in 2017 with *This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous* and *A Murder in Mansfield*, the latter of which trickled onto the festival circuit late in the year and is still continuing its run. Kopple showed that she couldn't be aged out of a rapidly changing art form as she profiled Toronto-born YouTube influencer Gigi Gorgeous (née

Gregory Lazzarato), who became a viral sensation by posting “how to” make-up videos at an early age and invited strangers to watch her transition from male to female. The film, a YouTube Red original, showed the positive impact the web could have for giving voice to marginalized communities as Kopple chronicled numerous people thanking Gigi both in person and online for helping them find hope. The film also revealed how the democratization of technology helped one generation make sense of another as Kopple found in Gigi’s father David an incredibly supportive figure who waded outside his relatively conservative comfort zone and provided the voice of love that any son or daughter would hope to hear. *This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous* caught a much different fight than Kopple saw in *Harlan County*, but one that was every bit as relevant in representing voices outside the mainstream.

Conclusion

Kopple learned filmmaking from the great Albert and David Maysles when a single course in cinema verité inspired her to pursue an internship with them. After shadowing the masters on films such as *Salesman* and *Gimme Shelter*, Kopple quickly matched the calibre of her teachers with *Harlan County, USA*, which came out shortly after the Maysles’ *Grey Gardens*. Like the Maysles, Kopple has filmed everything from great musical concerts to profiles of eccentric characters to films that proved socially and artistically influential. She’s taught students who became top doc makers like Brett Morgen, Lucy Walker, and Nanette Burstein, and her influence has reach countless students inspired by the power of *Harlan County*. 40 years, nearly 40 docs, and two Oscars later, few voices have toughed it out in documentary as powerfully and prolifically as Kopple has, and one would be hard pressed to find a woman director with such success and longevity. In a festival unofficially celebrating women behind the camera, Hot Docs couldn’t have found a better filmmaker to spotlight this year.

I found an SOS note from China in a box of decorations—and it changed how I live

Opinion: In Oregon, among Halloween decorations, Julie Keith found a cry for help from a Chinese labour camp. Years later, it's changed how she shops and parents

by Julie Keith
Apr 26, 2018



Julie Keith, in a still from 'Letter from Masanjia'. (Leon Lee)

Julie Keith is an executive assistant and mother of two living in Damascus, Oregon.

It was a grey Sunday afternoon in 2011, at my home in Oregon. My daughter was four years old, turning five the following week. For the first time, she was old enough to plan the details of her own birthday party and I couldn't wait to see her excitement on the day. She was born in late October, and so she decided she wanted a Halloween-themed party.

I had actually found most of the decorations we needed to pull off the party on sale at Kmart the year before, and so they were waiting in storage. So discounted were these accessories that I had enough left over to give her three extra presents to unwrap next week—cheapie things, but still, it was exciting.

I walked up the stairs to the attic—my daughter bouncing up alongside me—to unpack what would be the party's centrepieces: a 17-piece “Totally Ghoul” branded set of foam tombstones. I opened the big box and started passing her pieces of the convincing-looking “stone.”

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Then, from between two tombstones, a folded-up piece of paper fell on the floor. My daughter picked up the note and handed it to me, thinking it was part of the instructions. Neat handwriting in English and Chinese filled the lined, white note paper; one of the edges was ripped. I didn't know it then, but it would wake me up from my sheltered life and make me realize how much my actions affect people all around the world.

"...If you occasionally buy this product, please kindly resend this letter to the World Human Right Organization," it read, detailing punishments and abuses of people in a place called Masanjia. "Thousands people here who are under the persecution of the Chinese Communist Party Government will thank and remember you forever."

The fall air suddenly turned icy. My daughter couldn't read yet but she could read my face, riven in concern and bewilderment. The letter's steady tone of voice belied the shocking horrors it described. Tortures? Punishment? Innocent believers, put in prison? Thousands will thank and remember me? Who wrote this note? How did it get into this box of Halloween decorations? In an age of misinformation and wild publicity stunts, I needed to verify this before I believed any of it.

A Google search turned up what I hoped it wouldn't. Masanjia Labour Camp is known as "a place of nightmares" among Chinese dissidents, and it appeared the note was going easy in its description. I learned that human rights defenders and spiritual believers such as Buddhists and Christians who won't fall in line with the Chinese Communist Party's way of thought are sent to these places for "re-education," a euphemism for brutal torture, sexual abuse and brainwashing until they sign a contract promising they would change their beliefs.

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I realized I couldn't stand by and do nothing. I shared the note on Facebook and with media outlets—prompting exposes and a media firestorm that led to the release of some of China's prisoners and the eventual abolishment of the Chinese labour camp system in 2013.

Still, I second-guessed my decision afterward. Some people told me that because I publicized the letter, people in Masanjia would be punished, so I should have minded my own business. Had I endangered people halfway around the world, or upset the Chinese government? Maybe. Despite this awakening, I didn't fully understand the consequences.



Julie Keith meets Sun Yi for the first time in Indonesia, and shows him the letter he sent. (Leon Lee)

But then, years later, I finally came face to face with Sun Yi, the man who wrote the SOS note and risked his life to slip it into a box to be delivered a world away. Sun Yi is a soft-spoken, kind-hearted person who maintained his composure and quiet strength through horrors that one letter could never encompass. He had been detained for two-and-a-half years for practicing Falun Gong, a meditation practice outlawed by the Chinese government. He refused to give up his beliefs, and he paid the price. He was a one-in-a-million person who changed my life forever.

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Today, the thrill I had once gotten from the discounted decorations allowing me to buy more cheap gifts for my daughter couldn't feel more dissonant—I now know the human cost of that feeling. I explain to my kids that having a lot isn't important—it's better to have good things. If the hands that made them were treated well, it's more likely the item will stand the test of time and bring good memories. We own a little less, but we want for nothing.

Now that Sun Yi's letter opened my eyes, I feel changed. I am more attuned to humanitarian news near or far and more aware of the world around me. I think about where things are made and if someone suffered to make this decoration, or my shoes. My children, too, have taken a natural interest in all this. At school, my daughter shared the story of the note and my going to meet Sun Yi, helping to open little minds. The influence it has had on them is something I am really proud of.



Sun Yi, who wrote the letter that found its way into , holds it in Indonesia during a visit from Julie Keith.
(Leon Lee)

I never expected the story to blow up the way it did. Our modern society's attention span is so short though, so I want to keep this story fresh in people's mind, which is why I participated in Leon Lee's documentary and tell my story whenever I can. This is a monumental issue that needs all the help it can get, so I feel it's my duty to advocate.

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Every time I'm shopping, I think about Sun Yi. And I implore the people in my community to forego cheap items and to check where they're from. Forced labor and persecution are still rampant, and small acts can lead to big change. If I hadn't reported that letter, thousands of people could have remained locked in Masanjia to this day. It's time for action that opens people's eyes to the horrors that were brought into my home in a package from Kmart—and might be in your home, too.

The story of Sun Yi, his letter, and Keith's visit with him years later, is featured in the documentary Letter from Masanjia, which will make its world premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs festival on Apr. 27, Apr. 29, and May 4.

<https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/i-found-an-sos-note-from-china-in-a-box-of-decorations-and-it-changed-how-i-live/>



ET CANADA

'The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret'

A new documentary premiering at Toronto's Hot Docs film festival looks into Harvey Weinstein's past, eight years after filmmaker Barry Avrich made "Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Story" as he explores the clues he missed in the 2010 film.

<https://etcanada.com/video/1221012035616/the-reckoning-hollywoods-worst-kept-secret/>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Almudena Carracedo — “The Silence of Others”

BY Laura Berger April 26, 2018

Almudena Carracedo directed and produced her debut feature, the Emmy-winning documentary “Made in L.A.” She also directed the award-winning short “Welcome, A Docu-Journey of Impressions.” Carracedo was born in Spain and developed her career in the U.S. She is a Guggenheim Fellow.

“The Silence of Others” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 27. Robert Bahar co-directed the film.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

AC: “The Silence of Others” reveals the epic struggle of victims of Spain’s 40-year dictatorship under General Franco, who continue to seek justice to this day. Filmed over six years, the film follows victims and survivors as they organize the groundbreaking Argentine Lawsuit and fight a state-imposed amnesia of crimes against humanity in a country where these issues still stir divisions four decades into democracy.

I made the film in collaboration with my partner, Robert Bahar. We are thrilled that it premiered at the 2018 Berlinale where it won both the Panorama Audience Award for Best Documentary and the Berlinale Peace Film Prize.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

AC: As a child growing up in Spain during the transition from dictatorship to democracy in the late 1970s, I was surrounded by these issues. We, and our society, were all highly politicized,

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and I remember the hopes and dreams of my parents and their friends. Those early memories have always stayed with me.

I remember exiting the film “The Wind That Shakes the Barley,” Ken Loach’s 2006 film about the conflict in Ireland from the perspective of a divided family. I cried for hours afterwards. Something about it pained me deep inside, and brought back our history, and all the dreams and disappointments of my parents’ generation.

Robert and I were about to finish “Made in L.A.,” our 2007 film about the plight of undocumented immigrant women in L.A., and I felt that I owed something to my own country of origin. That pain is the seed of this film.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

AC: “That could have been me” or “that could have been my grandmother.” I’d like people to be able to walk in the shoes of these victims and survivors of crimes of the Franco dictatorship, and to consider what it would be like to be fighting for decades to recover a loved one’s remains from a mass grave, or to be seeking the truth about a stolen child.

I would also love for them to reflect upon how similar situations have played out in other societies. That’s what film can do—it can be an empathy-engine. It can make us feel, think, and question.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

AC: Everything! This film took seven years to make, which is how we make films—a slow cooking process where we try to capture the evolution of people and processes.

Funding is always a challenge, and such a long filmmaking process required 90-plus funding applications and weathering many rejections.

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Above all, as a filmmaker I had lots of doubts. There is so much unresolved pain and so much horror in this story, and the responsibility to do justice to that pain would keep me awake at night. Would we be able to capture the complexity of the situation? Would we be able to honor the journey and struggle of so many thousands and thousands of people?

In the end, I had to relax and trust the process. It's taken so many years but now I do feel that the film does justice to their plight, and also that it offers complexity and context.

On a personal level, filmmaking implies many sacrifices. On top of that, filming *verité* documentaries means that we don't choose the shooting schedule, and that work collides with family and parental roles all the time!

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

AC: "The Silence of Others" was funded slowly, step by step, over seven years with a combination of grants and support from United States public television: ITVS, POV, and LPB.

The fundraising was very difficult, and we wrote more than 90 funding applications, which involved 2000-plus pages! Eventually—over the course of seven years—about 15 funders came on board, which enabled us to make the film. So our funding journey has a happy ending, but the truth is that it was very, very challenging.

Of course, with the gift of hindsight, I can also see how, through all that writing, we were learning a lot about the film, clarifying our intentions, and developing and honing what the film would be.

We are incredibly grateful to our funders for believing in us and in the importance of this story for so many years!

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

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AC: We are thrilled to be doing the North American premiere of “The Silence of Others” at Hot Docs and to share it with the industry, many of our funders, our peers, and, of course, with Toronto audiences!

The film had its world premiere at the Berlinale, which was such a beautiful and emotional launch into the world. There were 24 of us onstage between cast and crew and the film won the Audience Award.

We are bringing some special guests to Hot Docs, too, and we hope that the experience will be equally powerful for Toronto audiences!

W&H: What’s the best and worst advice you’ve received?

AC: Worst advice: “Drop the subject. No one wants to hear about it.”

Best advice: “Trust the process,” which came from Robert. I am glad I followed his advice!

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

AC: Persevere! Filmmaking is not easy. There are so many hats you will have to wear, and so many obstacles you will have to overcome.

Being a female director and cinematographer means that some people will not necessarily take you seriously, but it also means that a lot of other people will believe in you and be by your side in that struggle!

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

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AC: As a film student, I was deeply moved by Barbara Kopple's "Harlan County, USA" and how powerfully she could cover social issues as cinema. And Agnes Vardá's "The Gleaners and I." Her mixed style, poetic-verité, really impacted me. I often return to these two for inspiration!

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women and some men in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

AC: While I salute all efforts being made in the film industry, and in any industry, to stop and prevent assault and harassment, I think it is important to remember that this is a complex, systemic issue that will not be easy to solve. It is clear to me that the kind of impunity that enabled some of the assaults and harassment currently in the headlines to happen—and to be covered up for so long—extends far beyond the film industry and has roots deep in our culture.

Many of us grow up in an education system and a society that ignores or devalues women and girls, and we are surrounded by media that reinforces these messages. Progress is being made, but there are so many little things—like gender-biased school textbooks, for example.

In general, these immediate efforts are very important, but I hope that we can draw bigger lessons from them, too—about striving towards a society that extends great respect for others, including women. I always keep in mind that this is a long fight that includes securing equal rights for all and in all aspects of life.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-almudena-carracedo-the-silence-of-others-5d2286e19a31/?gi=bb311bf2f9a4>

Documentary reveals the man behind the SOS letter from China's notorious Masanjia labour camp

MARSHA LEDERMAN

VANCOUVER

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The documentary Letter from Masanjia tells the story of Sun Yi and his SOS note from the notorious Chinese labour camp.

HANDOUT

The SOS was hidden in a tombstone. It was a pretend grave marker, made of Styrofoam and purchased at a Kmart an ocean away from where the desperate message had been written. It sat in its box in a storage shed in Damascus, Ore., for about two years, until Julie Keith dug it out in the fall of 2012 for her daughter's birthday party, which the then-almost-five-year-old requested be Halloween-themed. Out fell a note, handwritten in English and Chinese.

"Sir: If you occasionally (sic) buy this product, please kindly resend this letter to the World Human Right Organization," began the letter, written from a Chinese forced-labour camp. "Thousands people here who are under the persicution (sic) of the Chinese Communist Party Government will thank and remember you forever."

Keith didn't have luck when she tried to connect with a human-rights organization, so she contacted The Oregonian newspaper. The note soon attracted worldwide media attention. Through international pressure, the story effected historic change in China, with the closing of labour camps such as the one where the novelty tombstone was made – the notorious Masanjia.

Now, for the first time, the full story is being told in English, in a documentary that reveals the letter writer's true identity. In his new documentary, Peabody Award-winning Canadian filmmaker Leon Lee collaborated with the man who wrote the note – Sun Yi – and an anonymous filmmaking partner in China. Letter from Masanjia has its world premiere at Hot Docs this weekend in Toronto, before screening at DOXA in Vancouver next weekend.

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Mr. Lee, who was born in China and now lives in Surrey, B.C., has an interest in telling stories about contemporary China that can't be told from China; his documentary Human Harvest – about illegal organ harvesting – received the prestigious Peabody in 2014. After he saw news reports about the letter, he reached out to Ms. Keith and tried to find the person who had written it. Finally, in 2016, Mr. Lee tracked down Mr. Sun, with the help of dissident journalists who are members of the Chinese underground.

An encrypted Skype call was arranged. Mr. Sun had been working on a book about his story, but he felt a film would be more powerful. Mr. Sun, however, didn't know how to make a film or even operate a camera. And it is not safe for Mr. Lee to return to China, given his previous films. "We two had to pair up to pull this off," says Mr. Lee, 37.

Over Skype, Mr. Lee trained Mr. Sun in the art of filmmaking, told him what kind of equipment to buy and instructed him to find a trusted partner for the project. Mr. Sun sent compressed footage through an encrypted drop-box-type service, Mr. Lee checked the footage and offered feedback, and periodically the footage would be sent through underground networks on an encrypted hard drive. Once Mr. Lee received the hard drive, Mr. Sun sent him the password. "It was set up in a way that if I input the wrong password, then the hard drive would be permanently locked and all the footage would be gone," Mr. Lee says.

In this way, Mr. Sun and his anonymous partner documented his story about joining the Falun Gong movement, which was later outlawed; the horrific torture Mr. Sun underwent at the labour camp; and his clandestine letter-writing campaign – about 20 SOS notes stuffed into Halloween decorations bound, he figured, for the West, given the English used in the packaging.

By the time one of those notes made headlines, Mr. Sun had been released. He eventually managed to escape China for Jakarta, where he claimed refugee status. Finally, Mr. Sun and Mr. Lee could meet in person.

"By that time I have been communicating with him frequently, it was more than a year, he was like an old friend. I knew him inside-out," Mr. Lee says. "But meeting him, I kept wondering how such a gentle and quiet man possessed such strength."

Ms. Keith also travelled to Jakarta and their meeting is documented in the film.



Sun Yi, left, eventually managed to escape China for Jakarta, where he claimed refugee status and was finally able to meet filmmaker Leon Lee in person.

HANDOUT

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Letter from Masanjia also includes interviews with two of Mr. Sun's former labour-camp guards, who are not identified by name. While Mr. Lee expressed concerns for their safety if they appeared in the documentary, Mr. Sun advocated for their inclusion, telling Mr. Lee, "This is not only going to help the film, but it's going to help these guards," Mr. Lee recalls. "Because he knew how remorseful they were. Which turned out to be true; he told me after the interview they were very relieved. For the first time in their life, they had done something right."

Mr. Lee, who has lived in Canada since 2006, says China's economic power has made it difficult for his previous work to be distributed. "Many distributors and businesses in this industry rely on China now because it is such a large market, so many people have told me in private that they love the film, but can't distribute it."

Despite this obstacle, Mr. Lee hopes Letter from Masanjia is widely viewed and that its message provokes further action.

"Sun Yi wrote about 20 letters; this is the only one that came out. If Julie just gave up or didn't really care, then nothing would happen. Tens of thousands of people ... might still be locked up in labour camps all over China. I guess what I'm trying to [express] in the film is if an ordinary woman through her small action can do this, what if more people stand up and do something?" he says.

"Hopefully, after learning about Sun Yi's incredible story, people will feel inspired and encouraged to do something about the injustice they see. Quite often people are thinking how [can I] make a difference? It's such a complex problem, whatever it is, and being one person, what can I do? Now, from this story we know that everybody can do something and you never know what this might lead to."

Letter from Masanjia screens at Hot Docs in Toronto April 27 and 29 and May 4 (hotdocs.ca), and at DOXA in Vancouver on May 5 (doxafestival.ca).

The Last Testament of a Former I.R.A. Terrorist

A documentary film sheds new light on a notorious murder in Northern Ireland.

By Patrick Radden Keefe

April 26, 2018



“I, Dolours” intersperses interview footage of Dolours Price, a former I.R.A. member, with a series of evocative reënactments, including of the murder of Jean McConville.

Photograph Courtesy New Decade TV

In December, 1972, a woman named Jean McConville was taken from her home, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, by a gang of masked intruders, and never seen again. McConville was a widow, and a mother of ten; her children were home when she was abducted, and they screamed and clung to her legs. Her disappearance became known as one of the most notorious atrocities of the Troubles, the bloody, three-decade conflict that ravaged Northern Ireland. It was also, on a more basic level, a murder mystery. The McConville children were distributed to orphanages, and, growing up, they never knew what had happened to their mother. But it was long rumored that she had been killed by the Irish Republican Army, and, in 1999, the I.R.A. acknowledged that this was true. In a new documentary film, “I, Dolours,” which will be shown for the first time this weekend, at the Hot Docs festival, in Toronto, a former I.R.A. member, Dolours Price, describes in unprecedented detail the operation to kidnap, murder, and secretly bury McConville.

Price grew up in Belfast, in a staunchly Irish Republican family. As a young woman at the outset of the Troubles, she joined a secretive I.R.A. unit, the Unknowns, and performed dangerous

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operations, including an audacious bombing of the Old Bailey in London, in 1973. But after the Good Friday Agreement, which ostensibly brought an end to the Troubles, in 1998, Price grew deeply disillusioned. She broke the I.R.A.'s code of silence and acknowledged, in press interviews, that she had played a role in McConville's abduction: she said that she had driven McConville from Belfast across the border to Dundalk, in the Republic of Ireland, where another I.R.A. team executed her. Price also asserted that Gerry Adams, the Irish Republican politician who had helped engineer the peace agreement, was the person who gave her orders. Adams, who still maintains that he was never in the I.R.A., has strenuously denied this. (I wrote an [article](#) about this controversy in 2015, and am working on a book about the murder and its aftermath, "Say Nothing," which will be published next year.)

In 2010, Dolours Price agreed to speak at length about her I.R.A. career with the Bronx-based journalist Ed Moloney—on the condition that he not release the interview until after her death. They met in Dublin, where Price was living, and Moloney conducted a long videotaped interview. Price was not well at the time: she had struggled with alcohol and prescription pills, and been diagnosed with P.T.S.D.; she was being treated at a local psychiatric hospital. But in the interview she is composed, sober, and coherent. Price died in 2013, from a fatal overdose of prescription pills. As its title would suggest, "I, Dolours" is a testament: the only narration is Price's voice. The film's director, Maurice Sweeney, intersperses footage of Price during the interview—a pale woman with penetrating blue eyes, her hair short and platinum blond—with a series of evocative reenactments.

The members of the Unknowns were selected for the secret unit because they "could be trusted with very specific jobs, obeying orders without question," Price says. The unit was run by a man named Pat McClure, she continues. But McClure "reported back to the officer commanding in Belfast—who would have been Gerry Adams." One of Price's responsibilities was transporting people who had been marked for death out of Northern Ireland and across the border to the

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Republic of Ireland, where they would be killed. In one chilling section of the film, she recounts driving two I.R.A. men, Seamus Wright and Kevin McKee, to their deaths. They had both committed what was regarded as the ultimate sin in the I.R.A.: becoming British informers. After they confessed, Wright and McKee were told that their lives would be spared, so they joined Price for that final ride without resistance, believing that they were going for a brief holiday in the south. “Ultimately, I believe they were shot,” Price says, adding, “We believed that informers were the lowest form of human life.” (The bodies of Wright and McKee were discovered, buried in an Irish bog, in 2015.)

When Moloney asks Price about Jean McConville, she insists that McConville, too, was an informer. The I.R.A. has maintained for decades that McConville was murdered because she had been supplying information to the British Army. The children of Jean McConville—who today are parents and grandparents themselves—have angrily challenged this assertion, pointing out that Jean was a widowed mother of ten who would have had no access to sensitive information, much less the time to pass it along. A report by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, from 2006, also found no evidence that McConville was an informer.

But Price insists that she was. In the film, she repeats an old story about how the I.R.A. had discovered a radio transmitter in McConville’s apartment, which she allegedly used to pass information to her handlers in the British Army. But Price also tells a new story: she says that several I.R.A. members were hauled into a barracks on Hastings Street, “to be identified by a person concealed behind a blanket.” The blanket had a slit in it, so that an informer could peer through and supply the authorities with the names of suspected paramilitary members. But the blanket “stopped short of her feet,” Price says—and the suspects realized that the person hiding on the other side was McConville, because they “recognized the slippers.” When she was interrogated by the I.R.A., McConville confessed, Price maintains, saying that she had agreed to

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help the British “for money.” (Whether the I.R.A. tortured McConville before extracting such a confession, Price does not say.)

“Our first contact with her was to just pick her up,” Price says. Three members of the Unknowns—Price, Pat McClure, and a third—escorted McConville after her abduction in Belfast. McConville was not fearful for her life, Price notes, because they told her that she was not going to be killed but rather relocated by a charitable group, the Legion of Mary. McConville asked if her children could join her, and it was only at that moment, Price insists, that she realized that the widow whom she was transporting to her death had kids. Even so, she brought McConville to Dundalk, and handed her over to the local I.R.A. unit.

Until the release of this documentary, that was the extent of Price’s involvement in the McConville case, so far as the public was aware: she drove McConville across the border and turned her over to the people who would end her life. But, in the film, Price reveals that her culpability did not end there. “They didn’t want to do it,” she says, of the local I.R.A. men. “They couldn’t bring themselves to execute her. Probably because she was a woman.”

“So you guys had to do it?” Moloney asks.

“There had been a grave dug by the Dundalk unit,” Price says. So she crossed the border again, back into the south, along with Pat McClure and the third member of the Unknowns. I.R.A. members don’t think of themselves as terrorists, preferring the word “volunteer,” a term that encapsulates a sense of romantic sacrifice: combatants like Price were willing to volunteer everything—even their own lives—for the cause of a united Ireland. But, of course, they were willing to volunteer the lives of others, too, and, as Price describes the murder of Jean McConville, she slips into the third person. It is clear in the film that she is acknowledging her own responsibility, yet she recounts the act as though it was carried out by someone else.

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McConville “was taken by the three volunteers to the grave, and shot in the back of the head by one of the volunteers,” Price tells Moloney. She does not say, in the film, which of the three fired the fatal shot. But she suggests that, in the manner of a firing squad, they deliberately assumed a shared responsibility. There was a single pistol, which they passed around. “The other two volunteers each fired a shot so that no one would say that they for certain had been the person to kill her,” Price says. This was a comforting fiction: after McConville’s bones were discovered, in 2003, by a man walking along a beach in Louth, a coroner ruled that the cause of death was a single gunshot wound to the head, and only one bullet was recovered with the bones. If the other two did fire shots, they missed. “She was left in the grave,” Price says. “The local unit buried her.”

Pat McClure, the I.R.A. member present at the execution, is no longer alive. He moved to Connecticut in the nineteen-eighties, and died there in 1986. In “I, Dolours,” Price does not identify the third I.R.A. member, who may or may not be alive. But the authorities in Northern Ireland have arrested and subsequently released numerous people in connection with the McConville case—among them Gerry Adams, who was questioned for four days and then released without charges, in 2014. Only one person has been charged in association with McConville’s murder: a former I.R.A. official named Ivor Bell, who, the state alleges, played a role in aiding and abetting the operation. But Bell, who is in his eighties, has been diagnosed with dementia, and may never stand trial.

Moloney’s full interview with Price was turned over to the Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2013, as part of a court proceeding involving an oral-history archive at Boston College. (Moloney had deposited the Price interview at the university, under the assumption that doing so would keep it safe, not knowing that the university might one day turn it over to detectives in Belfast.)

“Do the disappeared haunt you?” Moloney asks Price, in the film.

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“Yes,” she replies. “I think back on those who I had responsibility for driving away. I’m not a deeply religious person, but I would say a prayer for them.” Moloney asks if she regards such forced disappearances as a war crime, and Price responds, “I think it’s a war crime. Yes.”

The Social – April 26, 2018

These women are changing the culture of kitchens

The Social
April 26, 2018



Caitlin Connelly/The Social

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<https://www.thesocial.ca/Culture/Film/The-Heat-documentary>

Gemini Award winning director Maya Gallus, renowned New York City chef Anita Lo, and pro cook-turned-professional-writer Ivy Knight are part of a new documentary called *The Heat: A Kitchen Revolution*.

It's all about female chefs who are changing the face of the restaurant industry, taking on challenge after challenge along the way.

In the video clip above, Maya, Anita and Ivy sat down with Melissa and Lainey to talk about why there aren't more female-led kitchen kitchens and how prevalent sexual harassment is in the restaurant industry.

'The Heat: A Kitchen Revolution' is screening at Hot Docs. You can find screening info on the Hot Docs website.

<https://www.thesocial.ca/Culture/Film/The-Heat-documentary>

'The Accountant of Auschwitz' doc looks at prosecution of aging Nazi guards

THE CANADIAN PRESS

VICTORIA AHEARN

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94-year-old former SS sergeant Oskar Groening looks up as he listens to the verdict of his trial Wednesday, July 15, 2015 at a court in Luenenburg, northern Germany. As a German Nazi SS officer during the Second World War, Oskar Groening worked as an accountant at the Auschwitz concentration camp in occupied Poland. But he didn't kill anyone nor sign orders to kill, according to his testimony at a high-profile 2015 trial, in which he was convicted as an accessory to the murder of 300,000 Jews. The new documentary ???The Accountant of Auschwitz??? explores Groening's case - looking at the complicity of him and other lower-level SS guards, and the debates surrounding their prosecution in the 1990s. *Tobias Schwarz / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

TORONTO — As a German Nazi SS officer during the Second World War, Oskar Groening worked as an accountant at the Auschwitz concentration camp in occupied Poland.

He documented and evaluated the worth of all the valuables of the prisoners as they arrived off the trains.

But he didn't kill anyone nor sign orders to kill, according to his testimony at a high-profile 2015 trial, in which he was convicted as an accessory to the murder of 300,000 Jews.

The new documentary "The Accountant of Auschwitz" explores Groening's case — looking at the complicity of him and other lower-level SS guards, and the debates surrounding their prosecution.

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“The reason why he was on trial is because they could prove that he was on the ramp where the selections took place: this person goes to the gas chamber, this person goes to work,” said Matthew Shoychet, the doc’s Toronto-based director.

“He was right there when the genocide was taking place, so just him being there makes him complicit.”

Debuting Sunday at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, “The Accountant of Auschwitz” comes shortly after Groening’s death last month at age 96. He had yet to start his four-year prison sentence, which he was appealing.

As Shoychet explains, Groening grew up in a nationalist family. After the war, he worked as a bookkeeper while living in his hometown in Germany.

He wasn’t on the radar of prosecutors until 2005, when he did an interview with the BBC and candidly talked about his experiences at Auschwitz.

That led to his trial, in which Holocaust survivors including Bill Glied of Toronto testified.

Glied speaks in the doc, along with other survivors and a variety of academics, lawyers and journalists, among others.

Also in the doc is Benjamin Ferencz, a U.S. prosecutor at the post-war Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders.

Ricki Gurwitz, one of the doc’s producers, said she came up with the idea for the film after doing a segment on Groening’s trial while working as a TV news reporter.

“One of the reasons we wanted to make this film is because the German judicial system, after the war, really did not prosecute Nazis,” said Gurwitz.

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“Their record is terrible. Out of the 6,500 SS guards at Auschwitz, only 49 were ever prosecuted.... In 2009 the interpretation of the law changed, so that meant that anyone who was just there could be prosecuted. That led prosecutors to (Groening).”

The filmmakers said Groening wouldn't do an interview with them for the doc, which does feature footage of him at his trial.

The film also looks at other Nazi war crimes trials, including that of John Demjanjuk.

“One of the questions, the central themes in our film, is Germany trying to make up for the mistakes of its past by prosecuting these lower-level SS guards who are 94, 95, today,” said Gurwitz.

“How complicit are they? They didn't shoot anyone, they were just there. They helped the system run but they weren't actually killing anyone. All their contemporaries have died, all their superiors who actually did the killing died.

“They're the last men who are able to stand trial. Should they be facing prosecution because they're the last men left standing? Or are they actually complicit because they were a cog in the machine and the machine would not have run without them there?”

In the film, one of the survivors says she initially had sympathy for Groening when she saw how frail he was in court. But that vanished when she saw a look of disdain on his face.

Yet another survivor forgave him and hugged him in court, said Gurwitz.

“It just goes to show that this case is not so cut and dry, it's not so black and white. There's a lot of moral ambiguity.”

<http://nationalpost.com/pmnen/entertainment-pmn/the-accountant-of-auschwitz-doc-looks-at-prosecution-of-aging-nazi-guards-2>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Yasemin Samdereli— “Night of All Nights”

BY Beandrea July April 26, 2018

While at the University of Television of Film in Munich, Yasemin Samdereli worked as Assistant Director on two of Jackie Chan's features. She has also directed “Kismet” and “Almanya: Welcome to Germany,” which premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2011 and went on to receive numerous prizes including German Film Awards for Best Script and Best Film.

“Night of All Nights” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 28.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

YS: Our film is about four couples from different corners of the world who are celebrating more than 50 years together. It's about not knowing much, or anything, really, about each other on an intimate level before jumping into marriage.

It's about how that intimacy takes shape over time and how it's kept alive. It's about the diverse ways that marriages begin, blossom, and can last a lifetime.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

YS: My grandmother was married at the age of 16, and let's just say it wasn't exactly what she wanted at the time. Girls were not really allowed to do what they wanted in Turkey those days, so she had to get married. She never had any sex education—we're talking about the '50s! As kids, when she told us about her first night together with my grandfather, we were in tears we were laughing so hard. It was tragic, of course, but also so funny, and in a way, quite touching. She laughed harder than any of us!

I was also drawn to the story because I myself had just gotten married and was facing my first marital crisis.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

YS: In the best case scenario, they'll have laughed a lot and cried a bit while watching it. Hopefully they'll feel like they can take away something special from the experiences of these couples.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

YS: Actually, everything about making this film was a really a big challenge! I don't normally make documentary films; most of my films are narratives. I kind of freaked out!

How do you work with real people sharing such personal stories? How do you even find them, and then convince them to be involved? Honestly, I was really scared, but at the same time I knew that I wanted to make this happen. If I wasn't scared, that probably would have been a bad sign. Overcoming the challenges I faced making this film are a big part of the result, which I'm so proud of.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

YS: Getting the budget together was not easy. Our first few applications for funding were denied, but we continued looking for solutions and found them by co-producing with a well-

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known documentary producer, Arne Birkenstock. He loved the idea, and said “Let’s make this an international thing.”

Then we got the distributors, Concorde, on board. They had done our last film, which was a big success at the box office, and they believed in us as filmmakers.

We re-sent some applications and this time were funded. In Germany, we were applying for regional funding, and we needed it from a few regions, so it took some time.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

YS: It’s such an honor. I’m so excited about it and very happy that two of the characters from the film, Bill and Norman, will be joining us for the premiere.

W&H: What’s the best and worst advice you’ve received

YS: Best advice: Don’t take anyone’s advice. I know that sounds silly, but if we listen too much to what others say we start to forget what we ourselves are to say. When I said that I wanted to make this documentary, most people thought that it would be a waste of time and energy, and that I should just stick to what I know and make Part 2 of [my hit feature] “Almanya.”

Worst advice: “The business side of filmmaking has nothing to do with us creatives.” It’s nonsense, and frankly, that line of thinking often puts directors in troublesome situations. Producing and directing is the only solution if you want to make unusual, original films.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

YS: Look for people who you appreciate and enjoy working with, and keep working together and supporting each other. Building a network is very important, and don’t sign contracts without the legal support of a lawyer.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

YS: “Antonia’s Line” directed by Marleen Gorris. I just love the charm and energy of that film and its lightness and originality. I think it’s just brilliant.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

YS: I think that it is a very important and necessary movement that will lead to a more complex, diverse, and fair industry.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-yasemin-samdereli-night-of-all-nights-37fa9831cbff/?gi=5b2be41eadcd>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Shameela Seedat — “Whispering Truth to Power”

BY Sophie Willard April 26, 2018

Shameela Seedat is a human rights law specialist turned filmmaker from South Africa. Since she began documentary filmmaking, Seedat has been commissioned by various local and international television stations. “Whispering Truth to Power” is her feature-length debut.

“Whispering Truth to Power” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 27.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

SS: “Whispering Truth to Power” tells the dramatic story of Thuli Madonsela, South Africa’s first female Public Protector. It’s an official position similar to an Ombud. Madonsela fought against corruption amongst the country’s most powerful politicians at great personal cost.

The film is part portrait; we see her as a boss, mother, and public hero. It also plays out as a gripping political drama—Madonsela ends her last year in office with a dramatic final battle against the country’s President, who has been accused of colluding with a wealthy family to “capture the state.”

W&H: What drew you to this story?

SS: Two main things. Firstly, I wanted to explore a woman in public office who had been confronting abuses of power at the highest levels in South Africa, and who was seen as a game-changer for accountability and governance. The second thing is that the story of Madonsela and her office reveals critical faults in South Africa 23 years after democracy. [I was keen to explore] race and redress for past wrongs.

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W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

SS: I think that it's up to them to choose a theme, character, scene, or even just a moment in the film to ponder further in their own way. But I suppose that I would also like people to somehow get closer to the current situation in South Africa through a human experience.

The film presents universal themes that I hope people, whatever country they may be in, can reflect upon: mother and daughter relationships, inter-generational struggles, societies' battle worldwide for a fairer and more equal society, and accountability of elected leaders.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

SS: The process of gaining access to film at the Public Protector Office in South Africa was a very complex and lengthy one. And even after we obtained formal permission, the mechanics of actually filming were very unpredictable, and at times I wondered whether the film would ever get made. Madonsela is also a busy person. Her schedule often changes and most cases dealt with by her and her team are confidential.

My instinct as a filmmaker meant that I wanted to film everything; see cases as they develop, observe office dynamics, personal moments, see her with her family, how the media deals with her, how people use her for their own ends, and so on. But we would often turn up at the office and the day's plan had completely changed, and she was nowhere to be seen—it was impossible to keep to a filming schedule.

But once I re-calibrated to a more zen approach, the possibility of actually having a film at the end became clear. And in some ways, I think it worked to the film's advantage—we were forced to stand back, observe, think, reflect, talk to her colleagues, spend time with her children, and gauge people's feelings who came into the office. I think that the challenges ended up making it a richer experience.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

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SS: Fifty percent of the film was self-funded through deferrals and unpaid work. The other 50 percent was through generous grant funding.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

SS: I am thrilled to have my film premiere at one of the most prestigious documentary film festivals in the world. Hot Docs offers excellent exposure, great audiences and discussions, world-class cinema, and the opportunity to interact with other filmmakers.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

SS: Worst advice: "Audiences aren't that open to new ideas and approaches."

Best advice: During a few extended periods when I was having great difficulty getting hold of my main character, when filming arrangements never worked out, and when it seemed that the film was hitting a brick wall, my producer husband presented it as a great thing for the final film and urged me to follow my basic instinct to pursue the story despite setbacks. Apparently, "the more difficult a character is to get hold of, and to film, the more creative or valuable that final film could end up being. So keep going."

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

SS: Never feel intimidated, and continue doing what you do with passion and with fresh eyes. Idealism helps. It's easy to be put down or be put off in this industry, and I feel that one has to consciously fight against that.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

SS: There are quite a few favorites, but if I am forced to choose just one on this particular day, I would say Pirjo Honkasalo's "The 3 Rooms of Melancholia." It has such few words but brings

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across such great emotion, poetry, and empathy on the difficult subject matter of children and war.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

SS: I think that it is very significant that that they have broken the veil of glamour around cinema. There are so many obstacles to women—and other minority or neglected groups—succeeding in the film business, and it is also very promising that the call for greater equality is being taken up by progressive film programmers and financiers.

Going forward, we need to keep the momentum. We can't become complacent. Stay vigilant. In every situation we should [bear in mind] how this or that perpetuates inequality in all its manifestations.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-shameela-seedat-whispering-truth-to-power-87db83c4f827/?gi=d2d7358340ae>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Joannie Lafrenière — “Snowbirds”

BY Beandrea July April 26, 2018

Joannie Lafrenière is a photographer and director based in Montreal, Canada. Her credits include “The Woman Who Saw the Bear,” which has been shown in major festivals across Canada and internationally, and “King Lajoie.”

“Snowbirds” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 27.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

JL: Through “Snowbirds,” we meet beautiful and colorful elders who have found their own place in the sun in a Florida mobile home park. They share their humor and happiness against the clichés and sadness often associated with old age.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

JL: The desire to overcome the prejudices associated with snowbirds, elderly Québécois who spend their winters in mobile park homes in Florida. Thus, we meet the human beings behind the phenomenon.

I was also drawn to the kitsch, pastime aesthetics of the mobile home parks.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

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JL: I hope that the audience will leave with the idea that beyond the cliché image we may have of a given community, individual stories can touch us deeply and help us overcome our prejudices—all while laughing heartily.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

JL: The financing of the film. For most Quebec institutions, it was a subject which people already knew of or had seen already, so we unfortunately had to do what we could with an extremely tight budget.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

JL: We received financial support from the CALQ (Quebec Arts Council) and TV5, a Quebec television channel. But in spite of this, it was mainly a labor of love since everybody on the team put a lot of their own time and money to get the film done.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

JL: I am deeply happy that my film was selected at Hot Docs. Hot Docs is really my favorite documentary festival. The screenings are full, the programming is great, and the encounters are truly inspiring.

As an alumnus from the Hot Docs Accelerator Program, it is with great joy that I am coming back to Hot Docs this year to show the film.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

JL: Worst advice: To wait for full funding before starting to shoot.

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Best advice: To trust myself and to follow my heart while taking into consideration the advice of people whose opinion and judgment I respect.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

JL: Trust yourself and don't doubt your ability to direct a film. Doubt in creation is healthy, but it is better to question our way of doing things rather than our capacity to do it.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

JL: Sarah Polley's amazing documentary "Stories We Tell."

[I'm also a fan of] Miranda July's work and her contagious and fully-assumed extravagance.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

JL: I am glad that these power relations are denounced, and I sincerely hope that this movement will be the precursor of a new time for women in the film industry and for all other women who are victims of the abuse of power. Together we will win!

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-joannie-lafrani%C3%A8re-snowbirds-18d1482efa0f/?gi=f54b31709686>

Hot Docs '18: PJ Raval unravels the process of making “Call Her Ganda”

By Daniele Alcinii

April 26, 2018



On October 11, 2014, the small island nation of the Philippines was mourning the death of 26-year-old transgender woman Jennifer Laude, who was found dead in an Olongapo City motel room.

The prime suspect was quickly identified as 19-year-old U.S. Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton, who, according to police and witnesses, accompanied Laude to the hotel. Local police authorities, however, were unable to detain him due to the Visiting Forces Agreement between the two nations, which allows the United States to keep jurisdiction over any U.S. servicemen locally charged or suspected of a crime.

In the days following the killing, filmmaker **PJ Raval** arrived at the Quezon City International Pink Film Festival, the largest LGBTQ festival in the Philippines, to promote his two films ***Before You Know It*** and *Trinidad*. During a panel session for LGBTQ Rights, and following a short clip about Laude, Raval's fellow panelists encouraged the Filipino-American director to develop a film about the crime, its subsequent trial and the hidden histories of American colonization and imperialism in the Philippines.

Now, nearly four years later, *Call Her Ganda* will enjoy its international premiere on April 28 at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival in Toronto. The film is produced by Unraval Pictures, in association with JustFilms | Ford Foundation, Fork Films, Naked Edge Films and The Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program.

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The 93-minute observational exposé examines the marginalization of transgender Filipinos by following activist attorney Virgie Suarez, transgender investigative journalist Meredith Talusan and Jennifer's mother, Julita "Nanay" Laude, as they galvanize a political uprising in pursuit of what they deem to be justice for Jennifer's death.



"It's a rare opportunity that I've been given to give a voice to a lot of people that have been overlooked and definitely underserved," Raval says in a phone call with *realscreen* from Lucasfilm's Skywalker Ranch, where he was finalizing edits ahead of the film's Tribeca world premiere earlier this month.

"I don't know if I would have felt up to that challenge several years ago, but I do now."

Creating a project in a far away country requires organization and a certain time commitment, particularly for documentary and non-fiction filmmakers who rely heavily on the lengthy process that is grants and foundation support. However, if unique events are unfolding, it's not ideal for funding on a project to take six months or more to come in.

Instead, Raval bypassed that waiting period by finding whatever resources were readily available and jumped right into the Philippines with a small filming team to capture the story as it unfolded before them.

With one problem averted, challenges would present themselves elsewhere. The creation of a foreign language project didn't sit well with American-based financiers and industry buyers, Raval notes, who see the North American market as "very cultural and ethnocentric" in thought.

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“I would take certain meetings and people would say, ‘We already have a film that takes place in Asia,’ as if they can only have one,” Raval explains. “There’s only one film that can represent all these different cultures? It’s insane.”



The flip side, though, is that Raval had managed to unearth industry executives who are “very open, aware and really want to support work that expands the conversation” throughout his tireless efforts to develop and finance the film.

In the four years of creating *Call Her Ganda*, Raval participated in a raft of pitching forums and programs, including the Firelight Media Documentary Lab, the Hot Docs Forum, the Sheffield Doc/Fest MeetMarket, and as part of the Sundance Institute’s Documentary Film Program.

“Firelight Media, they’ve been amazing. They’ve been so incredibly helpful and I cannot say enough in terms of the Documentary Lab – being in the room with these people, already I felt like I was being lifted up,” he says.

The film eventually acquired funding support from Austin Film Society; The Bertha Foundation; Denver Film Society; The Ford Foundation – Just Films, in association with Frameline Completion Fund; Arcus Foundation; Sundance Institute Documentary Fund; and Tribeca Film Institute.

“I am being honest when I say that I don’t think I could’ve made this film a couple of years ago,” admits Raval. “A lot of this is just me building the confidence to commit myself to telling a story that is so large in scope and importance.”

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Executive producers on the project include Jim Butterworth, Daniel J. Chalfen, Abigail E. Disney, Gini Reticker, Barbara Dobkin, with co-executive producers Jean Tsien, Jessica Devaney, Anya Rous, James Costa.

Raval, Lisa Valencia-Svensson, Marty Syjuco, Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala are producers.

- ***Call Her Ganda hosts its international premiere at Hot Docs in the World Showcase category on Saturday, April 28 at 9:15 p.m. ET at Toronto's Isabel Bader Theatre. Visit the festival's website for complete screening info.***
- ***The 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival runs April 26 to May 6.***

Hot Docs' 18: Exclusive clip from “The Accountant of Auschwitz”

By Kelly Anderson

April 26, 2018



In 1944, as trainloads of men, women and children were delivered to the Auschwitz concentration camp, their valuables were taken from them, and cataloged.

The accountant who took their belongings, Oskar Gröning, was convicted of 300,000 counts of accessory to murder, 70 years later, and his trial is the focus of Matthew Shoychet's forthcoming documentary *The Accountant of Auschwitz*.

The 80-minute film, which enjoys its world premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival on Sunday (April 29), looks at the 2015 trial of the now-94-year-old Gröning in Luneberg, Germany, and examines whether the prosecution of some of the last living Nazi war criminals is too little, too late, or whether it sends a powerful message to future generations.

The doc includes court footage and interviews with key players from the post-war trials, as well as with the Auschwitz survivors and plaintiffs, including Bill Glied (pictured), who passed away last month. His entire family will attend the screening.

In the below clip, Auschwitz survivors and plaintiffs see Oskar Gröning enter the courtroom as a frail old man.

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Randi Kirshenbaum is the executive producer, Ricki Gurwitz and Ric Esther Bienstock are the film's producers.

- ***The Accountant of Auschwitz screens at Hot Docs on April 29, 30 and May 4. Visit the festival's website for more info.***
- ***Check out an exclusive clip below:***

<http://realscreen.com/2018/04/26/hot-docs-18-exclusive-clip-from-the-accountant-of-auschwitz/>

Global News – April 26, 2018



Bachman: The Documentary

A new documentary profiling legendary Winnipeg guitarist Randy Bachman premieres at the Hot Docs Festival May 2. Director John Barnard joins Global News Morning to talk about the fil,

<https://globalnews.ca/video/4169713/bachman-the-documentary/>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Beatrice Behn— “The Artist & the Pervert”

BY Beandrea July April 26, 2018

Beatrice Behn is Senior Film Critic and Editor-in-Chief of Kino-Zeit, the largest German language film magazine for arthouse and independent film. “The Artist & The Pervert” is her first feature-length documentary.

“The Artist & the Pervert” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 27. The film is co-directed by René Gebhardt.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

BB: “The Artist & The Pervert” is a documentary about a relationship that makes people’s heads explode. Georg Friedrich Haas is one of the most renowned living composers of classical music. His wife Mollena is a famous Kink educator and storyteller. Together they live in a rather public 24/7 BDSM relationship. He is her master and she is his slave—an unusual combination which becomes highly political.

Georg is a white Austrian man and child of Nazi parents. Mollena is an African-American woman. The film documents their lives between perversion, art, and love, but most importantly it explores what radical, unapologetic self-determination looks like.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

BB: I was intrigued by the idea of one relationship challenging so many important topics of today’s society. How could a woman who considers herself a feminist submit to a man? How can a man who considers himself a feminist have his wife be a slave? How could a white man who was raised as a Nazi be dominant to an African-American woman and why would she allow

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herself to be his slave? Does his new lifestyle change his art? And what about hers? Is there space left for her art if she is his 24/7 muse?

I stumbled over their story when they outed themselves in The New York Times, and the comments there and elsewhere on the internet were prompt, harsh, and judging. It is easy to judge. However, I am a vociferous advocate of the art of seeing and learning, so this is what I did, together with my co-director René. We watched and learned.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

BB: I want people leaving the theater to think about their own lives and whether or not they live in a way they really want to. And if they don't—and most of us don't—I want them to ask themselves "why not?"

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

BB: I had always thought that my biggest challenge would probably be self-doubt. This is my first documentary, and I had no clue how to pull this off. But in the end, the biggest challenge was time.

We had no funding and worked multiple jobs and projects. Working during the day, editing during the night, and scheduling transcontinental flights around work shifts, etc. It was two years of working 15–20 hours a day, seven days a week. I wouldn't recommend this way to make a film—it's bad for your health and social life. But it was totally worth it.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

BB: This project had no budget, no funding, nothing. It was me, my co-director René, two halfway decent cameras, and a preparation phase of under two weeks. We contacted Georg

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and Mollena, they agreed to being documented, and two weeks later we were filming in their bedroom in New York.

We did everything by ourselves. If we did not know how to do it, we literally watched YouTube tutorials. We came a long way, but in the end we needed money for post-production. And then a little miracle happened. Random, unknown people—friends and some fans of our protagonists—rallied behind our crowdfunding and together we managed.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

BB: Honestly, when I applied it was one of those “this will never work out, but what have we got to lose” applications. When we were accepted, I screamed so loud you could probably hear it from Berlin, Germany all the way to Toronto, Canada.

Hot Docs is an insane and grand accomplishment, and it has already opened doors for us that we did not even know existed.

W&H: What’s the best and worst advice you’ve received?

BB: Worst advice: “You should go to film school first.” This is complete bullshit and a weird mechanism to discourage people from just trying something out. It’s also a vicious gatekeeping strategy for many people who cannot afford film school or wouldn’t be accepted. For me, this is part of the problem with the film industry, which is dominated by white men who usually come from wealthy backgrounds.

Best advice: Shia LaBeouf’s “Do it!” Video. This might sound ridiculous, but if you think about it, it’s hard to argue against him. Also, nobody else gave me really good advice, so Shia is still the best I heard.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

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BB: If you are passionate about it, just do it. If you don't know how, educate yourself. Don't wait for other people to do it for you or to help you. Do not listen to other people's fears, neatly packaged into what seems like advice.

When negotiating or asking for rights, use a gender-neutral name or abbreviate your name. People will think you are male and answer quicker, friendlier, and give you a better price.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

BB: I will name my most recent favorite one because there are dozens: Dee Rees' "Mudbound." She should have won an Oscar for this one, in my opinion, and it's a shame it ended up on Netflix. "Mudbound" reminds me of the grand, epic filmmaking of the classical American cinema period, threading together multiple storylines in such a beautiful and artistic way. It's incredibly well told, beautifully shot, and has a devastatingly perfect aura of melancholy, pain, and trauma that will seep all the way into your heart and wound you in a bittersweet way. In short, it is perfect cinema.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

BB: In general, this is a great thing and it's about time this happened! It is very important to come together and organize. However, it remains to be seen if #TimesUp can overcome internal differences that will occur, and if it can learn from the mistakes of other movements. I am hopeful, but this will only work out if this topic is dealt with thoroughly, globally, and most importantly, in an intersectional kind of way.

When I look at the past of the women's movement there was always a subgroup of affluent white women dominating the discourse and deciding which topics and people are important and which not. This has always led to other women being betrayed and ignored, which in return

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always leads to movements splitting up and fighting against themselves instead of the system that oppresses them. So fingers crossed this won't happen this time around.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-beatrice-behn-the-artist-the-pervert-5ec1f574524a/?gi=71dd3ff104c3>

Film On Oskar Groening Trial To Premiere At Hot Docs In Toronto

By Jordan Adler

April 26, 2018



Bill Glied (a survivor featured in the film, and to whom the film is dedicated after his recent passing) and director Matthew Shoychet.

For director Matthew Shoychet and producer Ricki Gurwitz, the chance to screen their first feature in front of a hometown audience is thrilling.

The Accountant of Auschwitz is having its world premiere at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in Toronto. Tickets have already sold out, except for a handful of “rush” tickets to be held for the days of the three screenings.

However, in late March, Shoychet and Gurwitz said the film still wasn’t wrapped. There was still a musical score to be added, as well as bits of news footage to obtain from German broadcasters.

“It’s a race against time,” Shoychet said.

Those time limits have been a challenge for the filmmakers since the project’s inception. The documentary focuses on a 2015 trial in Lueneburg, Germany involving Oskar Groening. Then, the titular accountant was charged with being an accessory to the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust.

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Groening was 94 when the trial began. He was not much older than the Canadian Jewish survivors who arrived in Lüneburg to testify, including Hedy Bohm, Max Eisen, and Bill Glied.

Shoychet first learned of Groening's name when he was a chaperone on the March of the Living, where Glied and Eisen accompanied him. The survivors missed the second half of the trip to travel to Lüneburg for this trial.

Gurwitz was also in that German town for the prosecution, covering the proceedings as a producer for CTV News.

"The more I read about the case, the more I thought, this is not so black and white," she says. "[Groening] was very interesting."

Then, many rejoiced at the opportunity to have a former Nazi face justice for heinous crimes. However, others took a look at the nonagenarian and wondered if it was worth the trouble to prosecute him.

Nevertheless, the trial gave Groening the chance to bear witness and admit what he had done at Auschwitz: collect the luggage of Jews, search for money and valuables, and plunder these belongings.

"He's actually speaking in the courtroom, saying, 'I saw the gas chambers,'" Shoychet says.

The Accountant of Auschwitz focuses not just on this occasion but also the history of Nazi trials in Germany. The film elaborates on why so few SS officers were prosecuted in the past, and how Groening's recent trial sets an important legal precedent.

"It was frustrating that it took him so long to get to trial," Gurwitz says. "So many men did terrible things... [and] never got punished but got pensions in Germany. It's pathetic."

As Shoychet adds, if the most sadistic and reprehensible Nazis only got a few years in prison, how does one properly decide how much jail time a guard like Groening deserves?

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These questions become harder to answer due to the passage of time. Few former Nazis are still alive, and even fewer are fit enough to stand trial.

“[Groening] was only being targeted because all his superiors have died,” Shoychet says. “His acquaintances never faced any kind of punishment.”

Meanwhile, there are not many survivors available to testify. Glied, Eisen, and Bohm were all interviewed extensively for *The Accountant of Auschwitz*, although their courtroom testimonies were not captured on camera.

Eisen and Bohm will be at the second Hot Docs screening, on April 30, with other Holocaust survivors in Toronto, Shoychet says.

The final cut of the documentary will be dedicated to Glied, who died in February at age 87.

Meanwhile, Groening died on March 9. Even though he was sentenced more than two years ago, due to illness and constant appeals from his lawyer, Groening never served a day behind bars.

Nevertheless, this feature-length documentary marks an important chapter in the history of the Holocaust – especially for the survivors who have waited decades for this verdict.

“The survivors said, ‘We don’t care if he goes to jail,’” Shoychet says. “‘The fact that this trial is actually happening and he at least had his day in court... For the history books and the records, it says he was found guilty.’ That’s enough for them.”n

Rush tickets for The Accountant of Auschwitz will be available one hour before the screenings on April 29, April 30, and May 4 for those in the rush line. The film will open theatrically in Toronto at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on June 8.

<http://www.cjnews.com/culture/entertainment/film-on-oskar-groening-trial-to-premiere-at-hot-docs-in-toronto>

Hot Docs Review: 'Three Identical Strangers' is an Eye-Opening Look at the Darkness of the World

APRIL 26, 2018 FERDOSA ABDI



***Three Identical Strangers* is a charming, shocking and emotional documentary about the supposedly sweet reunion between a set of triplets separated as babies.**

The documentary hits the ground running by introducing the crazy — but totally true — story of three 19-year-old boys who discover that they are triplets when two of them coincidentally attend the same college. The discovery will make you laugh and shed a tear (or three). We see a glimpse of the insanity that followed the discovery and explore the truly fascinating nature of identical triplets. However, the story quickly turns from sweet and endearing to downright devastating, and there are several discoveries that will make you gasp and scream in frustration.

Directed by Tim Wardle, ***Three Identical Strangers*** is a documentary that opens your eyes to the darkness of the world. The film leaves you wanting more, but you realize that you are just as clueless as the triplets themselves. It is an explosive piece of filmmaking that should definitely be seen.

***Three Identical Strangers* screens Thursday, April 26th and Friday, April 27th at Hot Docs. Its runtime is 1 hr. 36 min.**

<http://www.thereelroundup.com/2018/04/three-identical-strangers-hot-docs-review.html>

Hot Docs review: Mr. Fish: Cartooning From The Deep End

Profile of transgressive editorial cartoonist Dwayne Booth, a.k.a. Mr. Fish, could have a wider scope

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 26, 2018

11:41 PM



MR. FISH: CARTOONING FROM THE DEEP END (Pablo Bryant, U.S.). 70 minutes. Rating: NNN

Editorial cartoonist **Dwayne Booth**, who goes by the nom de plume Mr. Fish, is known for transgressive, contrarian images that challenge authority and power, question the official history of America and generally piss off a lot of people. **Pablo Bryant**'s movie catches up with him as he struggles to earn a living in a world where print media is melting down.

Bryant's film could perhaps have been a little less fawning about Booth's work, which tends to repeat the same three or four ideas (capitalism is bad, corporations are worse, politicians are untrustworthy, genitals are weird), or explored the conflict between Booth and his wife **Diana Day** – who's clearly more concerned about their family's financial stresses – a little further.

There are moments when the doc feels like it's about to do that – a conversation between Fish and his former representative **Daryl Cagle**, who explains that editors prefer "funny little jokes that offend no one" to genuinely challenging or shocking work. But Bryant never widens his scope.

April 29, 9:15 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 1, 10:15 am, TIFF 2; May 6, 6:30 pm, Hart House

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-mr-fish-cartooning-from-the-deep-end/>

In the Seats – April 26, 2018

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'INVENTING TOMORROW'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Victor Stiff - April 26, 2018

INSPIRING. Let's get that word out of the way now because you won't find many *Inventing Tomorrow* reviews that don't say it. And rightfully so. Director Laura Nix's documentary focuses on several remarkable teenagers preparing to attend one of the world's biggest science fairs. Nix has crafted an uplifting film sure to leave audiences entertained, informed, and walking out of theatres feeling better about the future.

Inventing Tomorrow introduces us to a group of exceptional students from Indonesia, Hawaii, India, and Mexico. These kids are some of their regions top Brainiac's and they've earned the right to fly to Los Angeles and compete in Intel's International Science and Engineering Fair (*ISEF*), one of the world's most prestigious science fairs. The most intriguing part of the documentary is that all the kid's projects are eco-friendly. They're not crafting more advanced versions of baking soda/volcanoes, they're creating ways to make the world less toxic, and watching them bring their visions to life is a thing of beauty.

Nix spends the first half of the film introducing us to the kids, their work, and their home lives. They're all charming subjects and it's a blast seeing them flip between science-mode and goofy-teenager-mode. I'm in awe these student's dedication to the pursuit of knowledge. What kind of kid puts down their iPhone long enough to examine soil samples or test water toxicity?

Inventing Tomorrow is a delightful documentary filled with fascinating kids who you can't help but root for. When the final credits rolled, my first thought was, "F#@k... I needed that."

Inventing Tomorrow planted a smile on my face and I left the theatre walking on clouds. It's been too long since something made me feel so optimistic about tomorrow.

INVENTING TOMORROW SHOWTIMES:

Sunday, April 29, 9:15 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 01

Monday, April 30, 12:45 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 01

Saturday, May 05, 8:30 PM, Fox Theatre

Sunday, May 06, 12:30 PM, Isabel Bader Theatre

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-inventing-tomorrow/>

Hot Docs Film Fest 2018: ‘Won’t You Be My Neighbor?’ is The Ultimate Superhero Movie

Published by [Victor Stiff](#) at April 26, 2018

Won’t You Be My Neighbor?

Directed By Morgan Neville

2018/USA

Morgan Neville’s documentary, *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?*, looks at the life and legacy of Fred Rogers, host of one of the greatest children’s shows ever made. I’m not nostalgic for *Mister Roger’s Neighborhood* the way I am for *Sesame Street* or *The Muppet Show* (don’t even get me started on *Reading Rainbow*), but not long after *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* began, old feelings resurfaced – a warm, comforting, familiar feeling settled over me. As soon as Fred Rogers showed up on screen, speaking in his gentle “Mr. Rogers” way, I felt safe and cherished, as if briefly transported back to childhood. My unexpected reaction speaks to the power of Fred Rogers, his TV series, and his impact on children’s lives.

***Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* makes the case that Fred Rogers’ TV persona was authentic.**



Credit: The Fred Rogers Company

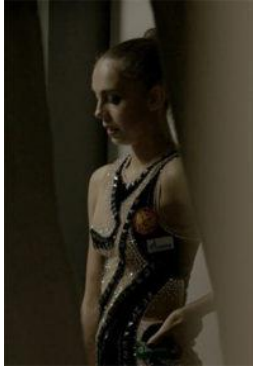
Fred Rogers warm-hearted persona and message of positivity always seemed too good to be true – even more so in these cynical times. Neville documents Rogers’ career from his days producing a local TV show all the way to the end of his iconic series, using old clips and interviews with people who knew him best. The film leads viewers to a definitive conclusion: Fred Rogers was a good man.

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Won't You Be My Neighbor? makes the case that Fred Rogers' TV persona was authentic. We see Rogers invite a black man onto the show to dip his feet in Rogers' wading pool at a time when America was racially intolerant; *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* presents many more examples like this. Rogers didn't crash land here from a planet with a red sun, but he is a Superman. He endured bullying, tough parents, as well as his show's critics, and became a better man because of them. How inspiring is that?

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'OVER THE LIMIT'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies, Theatrical by Paolo Kagaoan - April 26, 2018



Margarita Mamun tries to have a well rounded life while juggling gymnastic competitions. However, most of her life is under Russia's carrot and stick approach to coaching their athletes. Since this is Russia we're seeing, the stick hits.

Mamun's boss, Irina Viner, doesn't just speak to her charges through profanities. Even if she's trying to make her students hate each other she still teaches them actual technique. In her warped way she loves these kids.

Over the Limit, Marta Prus's documentary, approaches these subjects in a distant manner that almost seems objective. Her directorial hand is minimal and thus elegant. Mamun's daily nightmare seems more real than any Hollywood rendition could be.

Marta Prus explores the psychology of individuals within the Russian system. As dehumanizing as it could be, it still has these tender moments. She also lets us watch Mamun in her moments of escape from her tough coach.

Prus also smoothly transitions from one scene to another. It observes Mamun not just with Viner but with her personal and more loving coach Amina Zarapova. Time is brutally swift as Mamun prepares for the Olympics.

Another thing the movie does well is analyze gymnastics as sport and art. It's a duality that Mamun and her often warring coaches are aware of. Prus also catches Mamun and the other gymnasts in their lucid conversations.

The film is a world of deep pastels, making it seem like we're watching a world already gone. As the doc progresses, moments slow down, making us feel the intense concentration Mamun has to be in to win.

In the Seats – April 26, 2018 (2 of 2)

The camera always closes up on Mamun and the coaches. The stadiums where she performs aren't as intimidating as the people in it. There's also something elegiac within here, wondering what use it is to endure cruelty.

Hot Docs premieres *Over The Limit* at TIFF Bell Lightbox on April 28 at 8:45 PM. It also screens at the same venue on April 29 at 3:15 PM and on May 6 at 9:15 PM.

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'LAILA AT THE BRIDGE'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies, Theatrical by Paolo Kagaoan - April 26, 2018



This is a good film from directors Elissa Sylvia and Gulistan Mirzaei that quickly takes a dive into Afghanistan's capital. Kabul is home to many social classes but this documentary focuses on two, the first being the city's opium addicts. The second group are the government ministers and businessmen who can help them. Then there's the strong woman who is poking the latter to do more for the former. And that woman is Laila Haidari.

Laila at the Bridge does a decent job at contextualizing the Afghan opium trade. It started during the Taliban regime and increased after the War On Terror. However, the movie follows the pandemic's personal victims and survivors. It follows the titular subject as she struggles to keep her rehab centre afloat. Some of it involves meeting ministers, proving that her centre has potential. During these scenes, the movie doesn't shy away from her confrontational personality. The film also shows a few people within Haidari's close social circle. All of them experience different levels of recovery and relapse from the drug. There's Ikhtiar Ghul, one of the gentle giants squatting under Kabul's bridges whom she picks to treat at her centre. There's also Hakim, who has succeeded in beating his addiction. Like Haidari, he adopted a child whose biological father is an addict. He also reunited with his family after recovering.

Clocking in at 105 minutes, it's one of the festival's longer documentaries and it covers a lot of ground. It doesn't, however, explain exactly why the adversarial Afghan ministers are corrupt outside from the assumption that they are. I'm sure they are. There's also the score with the usual string instruments playing whenever we're seeing something sad. But while the government pretends to fix things, the doc shows us Haidari driving around Kabul to save lives.

In the Seats – April 26, 2018 (2 of 2)

Hot Docs is premiering *Laila at the Bridge* on April 30 at 6:30 PM at the TIFF Bell Lightbox. They're also screening May 1 at 10:30 AM at the Isabel Bader Theatre. Last show is on May 4 at 8:30 PM at the Scotiabank Theatre.

More than a Little Wisdom

Yuqi Kang's 'A Little Wisdom'

By [Marc Glassman](#) • Published April 26th, 2018 • [Issue 108, Spring/Summer 2018](#) • [Comments](#)



Courtesy Hot Docs

“You can’t find happiness somewhere else. I am just gonna stay here and have fun.” Those are the opening words in Yuqi Kang’s remarkable first feature film *A Little Wisdom*. They’re spoken by Hopakuli, a four-year-old boy who has been placed in a Buddhist monastery in Lumbini, Nepal by his mother. Chorten, Hopakuli’s older brother, is already at the Karma Samtenling Monastery, and we eventually find out that their father is dead. So, one might imagine Kang’s doc as a sentimental tale of a couple of unhappy kids who find some peace and tranquility among Buddhist monks—but that would be a mistake.

Kang has made a film that’s rich in its appreciation of the vagaries of life—and sadness is only one of many emotions evoked in *A Little Wisdom*. Chorten and Hopakuli are a couple of kids—crazy boys—and they play with each other and the other young monks in an atmosphere of savage innocence. It’s a measure of Kang’s success as a director that Hopakuli, Chorten and an older boy, Vija, accept her into their lives and open up completely to her and the inevitable documentary camera. We see the brothers fighting and swearing at each other, and their punches and kicks are quite real. But we also see them cuddling in bed together and telling stories—mostly by Hopakuli—some awful and others quite wonderful. By contrast, Vija comes across as a sweet kid: a mentor especially to Hopakuli but not nearly as complex a character as the brothers.



Hopakuli

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“The relationship between Chorten and Hopakuli is raw and vivid,” agrees Kang in an email interview with *POV*. “Hopakuli came to the monastery when he was around two or three years old, and he has no valid memories outside of the monastery of his parents. But he can always manage to tell many different versions of the lives that he has had and what his parents were like. It wasn’t until later on that I learned from Chorten what had really happened to their father. It became quite clear to me that the structure of the film had to unfold from three angles: the environment of Nepal, the lives of the characters and Hopakuli’s fantasies. I wanted the boys’ stories to be captured and depicted in the most intimate way; therefore, the style and tone between the boys is much different from the rest of the film.”

Kang has made a truly stylish film, and the tone is, as she intended, noticeably distinct when she follows the roguish Hopakuli as he wanders fields, yells at an attacking monkey or plays with Chorten and Vija. Music disappears, the camera comes closer and suddenly the audience is immersed in a *verité* doc, complete with diegetic sound. The approach works well, as it personalizes the scenes with the boys, giving the film a thrust in terms of character development and narrative arc. Hopakuli’s dreams are necessarily subjective, with shots of nature and abstract images accompanying his often-quirky tales.

It’s the third part of the film, on Buddhism and the nature of Nepal, that brings out a bolder, bravura approach from Kang. She opens the film with a stunning scene in deepest darkness with the monks, from the oldest to young Hopakuli, gathering to light candles. As they walk in order, chanting prayers and holding candles aloft, the orange colour of their robes marks a stark contrast to the immense black of the night.

In her press kit, Kang writes: “I crafted moments with natural elements such as the Sun, the Moon and the monkey, and other wildlife from the area. They each represent different ideas in Buddhism. I believe nature always can trigger a genuine emotion among all of us.” *POV* followed up, asking her to elaborate on her Buddhist perspective and how it impacts the film. She replied, “A great monk once told me that Buddha’s wisdom is all around us and that nature is the greatest of Buddha’s teaching. In the film, I tried to parallel the moon phases with the lives of the boys. I also tried to incorporate Buddhist meditation elements into the soundscape. The first sound of the meditation bell to me indicates that the journey has begun.”

Lumbini, Nepal is the birthplace of the Buddha. In the glorious setting of mountains, snow and trees, the monasteries—so rich in colour and minimal in architectural style—stand out as incomparably beautiful and peaceful. If you can’t be meditative here, where can you be?

In response to Lumbini and her own love of Buddhism, Kang’s final comment resonates profoundly: “Making this film, personally, was a lesson for myself to always have an open heart to people and lives.” That’s more than a little wisdom.

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A Little Wisdom screens:

- Sat, Apr. 28 at 3:00 PM at TIFF Lightbox
- Mon, Apr. 30 at 5:45 PM at TIFF Lightbox
- Sat, May 5 at 1:00 PM at the Revue

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'GURRUMUL'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies, Theatrical by Paolo Kagaoan - April 26, 2018



Gurrumul is the documentary about Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, the late blind Indigenous Australian musician. In making this movie director Paul Damien Williams had a lot of issues to consider. Williams, thankfully, conveys the right messages. One of them is Gurrumul being a bridge between his own people and the world. There are also a lot of breathtaking aerial shots of Galiwin'ku where he was born. Williams, however, doesn't let those shots linger like this is ethnography. He instead shows Galiwin'ku as a living, ephemeral memory. *Gurrumul*, and therefore, the film about him, try to preserve that for everyone to experience.

Gurrumul is also careful in its depiction of ritual. It also capably handles the values of the Yolngu people of which Gurrumul is a member. The film's fatalism is also haunting, especially knowing that Gurrumul is no longer with us. It depicts the singer's slow and sure rise. He went from being a backup member in bands to flourishing as a solo act. Homesickness factors in when he starts touring in Australia and Europe. Touring America is the next step and an important one for his record label. Which then brings up the problem of music as a product.

The documentary, thus, captures the frustrations of discovery. To get things right after a painful history of getting it wrong or disregarding cultures like Gurrumul's. In depicting how different people unite to go through this process, the movie makes his music transcendental. Few things are greater than watching musicians harmonize. We get that treat with Gurrumul and his producer Michael Hohnen, who helps him through both recording and touring. While Gurrumul is recording his last album, home is in heart. Cultural preservation is a burden and a duty to him, but his fruitful, beautiful creations are worth holding on to.

In the Seats – April 26, 2018 (2 of 2)

The first screening of *Gurrumul* is at the Scotiabank Theatre on April 28 at 8:15 PM. It goes to the TIFF Bell Lightbox the next day at 3:15 PM. It then returns to the Scotiabank Theatre for its last show on May 5 at 6:15 PM.

Review: 'The Heat'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 26th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Anita Lo in *The Heat*
Red Queen Productions

The Heat: A Kitchen @evolution

(Canada, 75 min.)

Dir. Maya Gallus

Programme: Special Presentations (World Premiere – Opening Night)

There's a bad meme called 'Get back in the kitchen!' that social media users (male ones) use to keep women in their place. The "joke" is gendered and draws upon outdated roles in which women cook for their breadwinner husbands. The line is a symptom of the culture of toxic masculinity that's finally seeing a reckoning.

Kitchens are nevertheless traditionally domestic spaces in a complicated social history of prescribed gender roles. For many, the best memories of home often centre around the dinner table with mom's home cooking bringing the family together. (Even if one grew up in a home like mine where most of the cooking was by President's Choice, we still had mom to thank for putting it in the oven after a full day of work.) Despite this history of gender roles, men far outnumber women in the kitchens of restaurants around the world. Women, according to memes and men stuck in 1952, belong in kitchens, but not those within the professional sphere.

Women take back the kitchen in Maya Gallus' *The Heat*. The director returns to the world of restaurants after 2010's *Dish* and asks why so few women enjoy lead roles in restaurants when the domestic space is traditionally dominated by their gender. If women want to take pleasure in creating culinary delights and satisfying hearts as well as bellies, patriarchal society tells them they had better do it at home. Many male chefs owe their mothers credit for being their first teachers, yet the toxic work culture of the food industry is past its expiry date when it comes to treating women respectfully.

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The chefs' creations photograph beautifully in Gallus' film, as they always do in foodie flicks, but *The Heat* isn't mere food porn. *The Heat* offers a warm plate of expertly made food—and a lot of comfort—as Gallus goes into various kitchens and interviews the women whipping up change. Restaurants in Toronto, New York, and London provide a diverse chorus of chefs who dish the pains and virtues of succeeding in a traditionally male dominated field. The film shows pride and joy from women who break glass ceilings like crème brûlée tapped with a spoon.

Gallus admirably approaches the topic from the perspective of intersectional feminism and ensures that women of varying races and orientations have a place at the table. The conversation for representation only works if it's inclusive and *The Heat* encourages audiences to consider diverse hands chopping, preparing, mixing, and plating the foods that consumers see as high cuisine. The stories illustrate how much a diner can take for granted.

For example, just take the perspective of Toronto chef Suzanne Barr who chats with Gallus from behind the counter of Saturday Dinette, a now defunct hole in the wall on Gerrard Street in the city's East End. Barr dishes about the satisfaction she enjoys serving hearty meals in a space she carved for herself in a field dominated by white men. Her kitchen is a quietly political act that continues the legacy of shared experiences through food passed down from her mother, but more significantly, the greasy spoon lets Barr reclaim a space previously denied to Black diners. The walls of Saturday Dinette, adorned with photographs from sit-ins during the Civil Rights movement, acknowledge the systemic inequality on both sides of the counter. Other sequences observing chefs such as Amanda Cohen, Anne-Sophie Pic, and particularly New York chef Anita Lo highlight how increasing representation in the kitchen matters.

Gallus interviews the chefs in addition to filming them on the job. The chefs outline several awful experiences with the bitter taste of toxic masculinity that too frequently overwhelms kitchens. Stories of verbal and physical abuse, shot in interviews prior to the downfall of Harvey Weinstein and the larger cultural "reckoning," are not unique in this film. However, the chefs shake off these tales and frankly admit that the toxicity is a product of a fast-paced workplace they had to deal with while advancing their careers. It's not a necessary factor, though, as the hustle bustle Gallus observes in the kitchens commandeered by woman is often one of orderly, respectful chaos.

One also can't overlook the chefs' agreement to be defined by their creations rather than their gender. More than one chef acknowledges that a unique "female" flavour doesn't signal to diners the gender of a cook. They just want a fair shot at the same opportunities men enjoy, and

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in that regard especially, *The Heat* is an appropriate, positive, and inclusive selection for opening night at Hot Docs' female- friendly festival.

One can't overlook how relevant the conversation of *The Heat* is to the film industry. One could easily substitute each chef with a director and each restaurant with a film to drive the same conversation encouraging the film industry to push for change. The doc leaves ample food for thought as the festival serves a buffet of female-driven stories. *Bon appétit!*

The Heat screens:

-Thurs, Apr. 26 at 9:30 PM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

-Sat, Apr. 28 at 1:15 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sun, May 6 at 3:30 PM at Isabel Bader

It opens theatrically at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema on Friday, May 11.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'Over the Limit'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Chelsea Phillips-Carr](#) • Published April 26th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Over the Limit

(Poland, Germany, Finland, 74 minutes)

Dir: Marta Prus

Programme: World Showcase. (North American Premiere)

When asked about her personal goals, Russian rhythmic gymnast Margarita Mamun responds by saying, "We should push past our limits." Throughout the film Mamun's goal is met, over and over, as she practices and performs her routines amidst a grueling training schedule, family emergencies, injury, and the constant verbal berating by coaches.

Over the Limit, in its repetition, can become dull. We watch Mamun dance, with grace, beauty, and strength that seem almost inhuman. And then we watch as her coaches tell her how bad she was, how she will never amount to anything—showing the disappointment they feel at her failure. Mamun, every time, responds with a blank expression, save for a quivering lip, which betrays her emotions. Over the course of the film, we become too accustomed to this pattern, with Mamun's dances becoming artistic interludes to the film's "drama."

Ultimately, the most interesting thing about the documentary isn't its capturing of the hard life of the athlete, but the question it poses of why we do the things we do. Throughout the film, Mamun seems to be in a state of fear and uncertainty, hurting herself physically and emotionally. She performs beautifully, only to be told she's no good. And so we can ask, why continue in this profession for so long, competing in this sport that seems to offer no benefits?

Over the Limit is a film about passion and art. It is a film about what drives us, beyond logic and comfort. For Mamun, she tells us it's to go beyond her limits. And hopefully, that is what she achieved. Despite the constant insults her performances garner in Prus' documentary, Mamun would go on to win gold at the Olympics before finally retiring. An exploration of one woman's ambition, *Over the Limit* goes beyond its simple narrative in its psychological questions.

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Over the Limit screens:

-Sat, Apr. 28 at 8:45 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sun, Apr. 29 at 3:15 PM TIFF Lightbox

-Sun, May 6 at 9:15 PM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'Warrior Women'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Chelsea Phillips-Carr](#) • Published April 26th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Warrior Women

(USA, 67 minutes)

Dir: Christina D. King, Elizabeth A. Castle

Programme: The Good Fight. (World Premiere)

In *Warrior Women*, history is told by the women who made it. Centered on Madonna Thunder Hawk, a Lakota activist with a decades-long career, the film shares discussions she has with her peers and her daughter as they reminisce on community organizing, politics, culture, and family. Their words, supplemented by archival footage, create the story of Indigenous activism by women.

It is the bonds between these women, which make the documentary remarkable. While the historical treatment of activism, depicting determination and fierce devotion to a cause, is illuminating, those stories are brightened by the personal comradeship between the women. A tribute to sisterhood and matriarchal environments, we watch as women come together to support and protect each other, fighting for themselves and their communities with ingenuity and perseverance.

Exemplary of this celebration of feminine legacy is the focus on Madonna's relationship to her daughter Marcella. Madonna, often not expressive emotionally and incredibly focused on her cause, is never condemned by Marcella for coldness and distance, though their connection could be at times less like mother and daughter, and more akin to comrades in arms. Approaching her mother with compassion and admiration, Marcella creates her own family, which builds off of Madonna's, one that encompasses both emotions and politics. *Warrior Women* is about progress, and this extends to the personal sphere as well as the public. It is a progress that comes with respect for the women that came first, and the ability to use knowledge of the past to build something even more powerful.

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It is undeniable that *Warrior Women* is a necessary film. When we look at issues today like the Standing Rock protests of the Dakota Access Pipeline, it is obvious that there is so much more to be done. Learning about the history of Indigenous activism is a benefit to audiences who can better understand the background of North American settler colonialism and its enduring impact. But with the approach of championing the women of these movements, and how their labour and connections have gone beyond the activism in order to sustain cultures amidst struggle, the film offers a celebration of the mothers and daughters who continue to fight, together, for a better future.

Warrior Women screens:

-Sat, Apr. 28 at 4:15 PM at Isabel Bader

-Sun, Apr. 29 at 9:00 PM at Scotiabank

-Sat, May 5 at 3:15 PM at the Fox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'Hugo'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Chelsea Phillips-Carr](#) • Published April 26th, 2018 [1 Comment](#)



Hugo

(Poland, 80 minutes)

Dir: Wojciech Klimala

Programme: World Showcase. (North American Premiere)

Hugo begins slowly, revealing itself at a leisurely pace despite the urgency of its content. A young boy between six and seven, the eponymous Hugo seems average: he loves Spiderman and ice cream, he plays football, and he seems blissfully unaware of his circumstances. His grandfather Dzidek, however, struggles to raise the boy, lacking the funds to do so while grappling with a difficult family history, as he grieves the loss of his daughter and navigates raising his grandson, whose real father is imprisoned in another country.

The documentary has some faults. Using a mix of home videos and shaky footage from the present, with washed out tones punctuated by the faded colours of the carnival Dzidek used to run, the overall look of *Hugo* is at best unappealing. The narrative ambiguity is a technique, which misses its mark, feeling like a gimmick to make the film seem more sophisticated and creative, without doing much to actually ensure that is the case. But the greatest problem is the overall energy of the film.

Watching the difficulties experienced by this small family on screen, *Hugo* comes off as exploitative. Over an extensive amount of time, we watch as Dzidek describes his financial difficulties, deals with child services, and fails to get any sort of aid from those around him. We witness him succumbing to stress, unable to adequately raise the child he treats like his own son while facing the threat that Hugo's biological father, regardless of his fitness as a parent, will take the boy away once he is released from prison. Finally, in one disturbing scene, the filmmaker stands by passively and unobtrusively as Dzidek, angry and worn down, takes out his frustration upon a silent Hugo, telling his grandson that no one else wants him, and that he is a

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burden. And so, amidst the turmoil we have already seen, we watch the boy endure a harsh verbal attack.

Hugo starts off with an interesting premise. It contemplates what family means, and how bonds are built or broken. It questions the place of God and religion when faced with death. It confronts the ideas of mourning, recovery, and history. Ultimately, however, the film wallows in the melodrama of hardship, adding little value to its value as a documentary. *Hugo* had promise, but ended up as a spectacle of misery.

Hugo screens:

-Tues, May 1 at 8:45 PM at Innis Town Hall

-Wed, May 2 at 12:30 PM at Scotiabank

-Sun, May 6 at 8:30 PM at Scotiabank

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'I, Dolours'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Chelsea Phillips-Carr](#) • Published April 26th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



I, Dolours

(Ireland, 82 minutes)

Dir: Maurice Sweeney

Programme: International Spectrum. (World Premiere)

In 2010, former Irish Republican Army member Dolours Price gave a series of interviews, under the agreement that they could only be released after her death. Most famous for her involvement in the bombing of London's Old Bailey in 1973, an attack which injured hundreds of people and killed one, Dolours' story is expanded upon in Maurice Sweeney's documentary, where reenactments illustrate her words as she details her childhood, radical experiences, incarceration, and beyond.

With such controversial subject matter, *I, Dolours* has all the appeal of being let in on a secret. Intimately, we gain access to forbidden knowledge, the indulgence of gossip being grounded by the severity of real events. Dolours is an engaging speaker, and her passion comes through as she recounts her upbringing within a staunchly republican family, as well as her determination and commitment to fight for the rights of her people.

But Sweeney's doc takes an impartial perspective. The film allows Dolours to discuss her life as she sees it. We hear what drove her to acts of terrorism, and how she could justify violence, rationalizing her radicalism. We also watch, with great sympathy, as she is put into prison, taking on a 200-day hunger strike, which is extended by force-feeding. Simultaneously, we receive the facts of the violence she participated in, especially the "disappearing" of other IRA members deemed to be traitors or informers. In particular is the killing of Jean McConville, a widowed mother of ten. Archival footage of her bewildered children is horrifying to contemplate

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especially after hearing Dolours' description of personally driving the condemned woman to the place where she would be executed.

There is discomfort in this whiplash of perspectives. In showing both sides bluntly, *I, Dolours* is able to depict "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland as an incredibly complex set of issues. The film shows understanding and compassion towards Dolours' republicanism, and never portrays Britain as faultless in the conflict. It equally shows the violence of the IRA (towards innocent people, towards their own people), and does not allow these acts to be justified by the greater struggle for Irish independence. In this way, *I, Dolours* is able to handle a loaded issue with respect, treating its source with dignity but without falling into reverence, exploring the history without accepting it.

I Dolours screens:

-Sat, Apr. 28 at 6:00 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sun, Apr. 29 at 1:00 PM Isabel Bader

-Sun, May 6 at 8:15 PM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'CHEF FLYNN'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Film Festivals, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Victor Stiff - April 26, 2018



When we first meet a young Flynn McGarry, he's a squeaky-voiced child with boundless energy. But hidden behind that youthful bombast is a smart, talented, and incredibly driven kid. Cameron Yates' documentary, *Chef Flynn*, chronicle's Flynn's rise from boisterous youngster to a famous chef – which he achieves before his fifteenth birthday.

At the age of ten, Flynn – with the help of his classmates – began transforming his living room into a supper club. People came from far and wide to score highly coveted seats and experience Flynn's "gastronomic delights." On days off, Flynn would go into his room to perfect flavourful blends like a wizard in a tower practicing new spells. Flynn's tricked out bedroom is unlike any child's bedroom you've ever seen. Most kids clutter their rooms with movie posters, Xboxes, and sports equipment. Flynn's room is packed wall-to-wall with cooking equipment; ovens, blenders, cookbooks, pans, and hot plates cover every surface.

Flynn's mom, Meg, is a writer, actress, and filmmaker, and it shows. Meg keeps her camera locked on selfie mode, always corralling her son into the frame. Flynn is the modest one, preferring to dodge the camera's gaze. Flynn's preference to keep things low-key keeps us from getting to know him and robs the film of its soul. I watched Flynn work but I didn't feel like I watched him grow.

Flynn's remarkable story is ripe for a documentary film. People love uplifting stories about finding one's passion and making good on one's dreams. This film, though, feels like all frosting and no cake. It hits the beats you want from a documentary but still feels hollow. *Chef Flynn's* story is fascinating but Flynn McGarry, the young man, less so.

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Chef Flynn showtimes:

Saturday, April 28, 6:45 PM, Isabel Bader Theatre

Sunday, April 29, 10:45 AM, TIFF Bell Lightbox 01

Saturday, May 05, 1:15 PM, Isabel Bader Theatre

In the Seats – April 26, 2018

HOT DOCS 2018: OUR REVIEW OF 'THE BROKER'

Posted in Festival Coverage, Hot Docs 2018, Movies by Courtney Small - April 26, 2018



In an age of online dating sites and apps that find your perfect match through a swift swipe left or right, Mrs. Sadri is almost a rarity. The manager of an Iranian dating agency, Mrs. Sadri is not concerned with making dreams come true. In fact, she thinks her clients should scrap their silly notions of love and be more practical.

As the audience observes in Azadi Moghadam's documentary *The Broker*, marriage is not a luxury, but rather a necessity. In a society where men have all the power, and only want much younger partners, a woman's worth is not judged by intellect or personality, but rather by material status and youth.

Instead of challenging the patriarchy, Mrs. Sadri and her team work hard to uphold it. They revel in their limited power to be both matchmakers and therapists for their clients.

While they instruct their male customers to look nice and think about permanent marriage as a goal, the female clients are advised to be thankful for whatever they can get. After all, a bad husband is better than no husband.

It is when Moghadam shows the inherent contradiction engulfing the agency that *The Broker* is most revealing. They may preach the virtues of putting aside one's desires and expectations in favour of completely pleasing a man, including forgiving and forgetting every time he strays, but find it hard to adhere to this themselves. For example, one of Mrs. Sadri's widowed co-worker, struggles with falling in love with a companion 20-years her senior who does not love her back. While it is possible to remove love from a marriage of convenience, *The Broker* shows that our natural desire for love, affection and respect can never truly be erased.

Screens:

Saturday, April 28, 5:45 PM, TIFF Bell Lightbox

Monday, April 30, 2:45 PM, Scotiabank

Friday, May 4, 3:30 PM, Revue Cinema

<http://intheseats.ca/hot-docs-2018-our-review-of-the-broker/>

Hot Docs 2018: The Devil We Know

Tags: [chemical](#) [dupont](#) [devil](#)

April 26th 2018

Sean Kelly



One of the biggest environmental scandals of all time is unraveled in *The Devil We Know*. The town of Parkersburg, North Virginia is home to the DuPont chemical company, which is best known for developing Teflon non-stick cookware. However, it is discovered that Teflon's key chemical ingredient C8 is not only responsible for various health issues around Parkersburg, but is also present in the blood of 99% of all Americans.

The Devil We Know is an expose documentary from filmmakers Stephanie Soechtig and Jeremy Seifert, which unravels the negative environmental effects of the chemical C8 and the subsequent cover-up by the DuPont chemical company. The town of Parkersburg, where DuPont is located, is the most affected by C8, with many residents developing either cancer or birth defects. This results in a class action lawsuit to try and make DuPont liable for unleashing this chemical onto the world.

Nobody really thinks twice when they look at the non-stick cookware in their kitchen and whether or not it was developed in a toxic chemical. C8 was originally developed by 3M, but eventually adopted by DuPont, who continued to use the chemical after 3M discontinued it.

The Devil We Know is a somewhat scary documentary, which shows how a corporation is willing to ignore negative health effects of the chemical that makes them a profit. While not the

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first documentary about the environmental effects of the industrial age, it is still a pretty affecting one.



Screenings

- Sunday, April 29, 6:15 PM - Hart House Theatre
- Tuesday, May 1, 12:30 PM - Scotiabank Theatre 3
- Friday, May 4, 12:15 PM - Hart House Theatre

Hot Docs' dean stays keen on the genre after 20 years

By **SHINAN GOVANI** Star Columnist
Fri., April 27, 2018

Movies come, and they go, for Hot Docs president Chris McDonald.

But even now, with the all-you-can-eat Toronto documentary festival marking its 25th anniversary this week, the professional film lover really can't think of a better way of Ebert-ing than the strategy employed by his dad.

"If my father likes a film, he says, 'It makes you think,' " said McDonald the other day at Soho House.

"If he doesn't like it as much, he'll say, 'That's different.' "

Kind of genius!

A flicker of droll passes over his face — the same expression, incidentally, that I detected a year and half ago when I ran into him on North Palm Canyon in Palm Springs, of all places. Looking somewhat cagey, McDonald admitted at the time that he had, well, escaped from a haunt, particularly well known for celebs, known as We Care, a so-called "fasting and spiritual retreat" in the desert.

His top-secret mission then? To find some darn coffee!

Your secret is safe is with moi, I'd told him, my fingers crossed deftly behind my back.

What's no secret these days? The extent to which Hot Docs has grown to become the largest documentary showcase on the continent. Not only that, but it is — in term of "butts in seats," as 55-year-old McDonald puts it — the second-biggest trafficked festival, period, in North America (in line only after the Toronto International Film Festival).

The Toronto Star – April 27, 2018 (2 of 4)

The program for 2018 runs the boards: from a free world-premiere screening in Imax of *The Trolley* (a spin through public transit in 34 cities) to intriguing deep dives like *Behind the Curve* (a look at the rise of Flat-Earth believers) and *The Broker* (a look into the ins and outs of an Iranian dating agency); a pure pleasure-delivery system like *The Bill Murray Stories* (wisdom and wit from the man himself), requisite viewing like *Active Measures* (a close examination into the interference of Russians in the 2016 U.S. election), plus a spatter of films from and about Mexico.

And that's just for the proverbial starters.

The numbers of Hot Docs tell the story:

3000: The films submitted to the fest from around the world

146: The films McDonald says he's personally screened (out of the 200-plus films screening at the fest, until May 6)

20: The years the man before me has been associated with the documentary bacchanal

And though there was a peaceful renegotiation of powers within the organization a few years ago — Brett Hendrie taking over as executive director, while McDonald entered the newly created position of president — it's clear to longtime watchers that Hot Docs continues to be his baby.

"Nightmare," he one-words when asked to describe those earliest days. "The cinemas were empty ... and we hadn't realized there was a marketing element to all of this. Documentaries then was still considered a bit of a slog. But once films began to get financed at our festival, that's when people started to notice. And once some of the veteran filmmakers — like Errol Morris and Werner Herzog — started to come, that changed things, too. It took a while, too, to get the resources we needed."

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Sporting a pair of Prada loafers, the sides of his head with specks as fine as Maldon salt, McDonald strikes the adroitness of a congenial sea captain. Flicking through a Hot Docs brochure, he nostalgically points to a number of titles that, over the many years, broke through, won Oscars or both. Films like *Waltz with Bashir*, or *Finding Vivian Maier*, or *Inocente*.

One thing that has inevitably affected the appetite for documentaries and, to some extent, changed the cultural conversation around them over the last two decades, is the extent to which reality shows and just plain life documentation are part of everyone's media diet. Just think of the ubiquity of YouTube, the lingua franca of "selfies."

"We are all documentarians and consumers of the form now," McDonald begins, pointing out that the form, in all its myriad manifestations, has been "democratized."

"No one is afraid of cameras. No one is afraid of being filmed, it seems. We're all storytellers. Everything changed; technology changed everything. That you can even edit on a laptop ..." he trails off.

Asked if there's one thing he's tired of seeing in documentaries these days, he comes back: "I'm almost over drones. Every second film now has an establishing drone shot."

Asked if he has a pick for me at the current fest, he points to the too-crazy-to-be true *Three Identical Strangers*, about three teenagers in the 1980s who discover by accident that they're triplets separated at birth. "You just have to see it."

I bring up the one Hot Docs offering that I happened to screen the night before: *Constructing Albert*, a year in the life of Spanish chef Albert Adria, brother of Ferran of elBulli fame. Centred in Barcelona, and redolent of the spirits of both Pedro Almodovar and Peter Greenaway, the film is a vehicle for love, valour and tapas. I loved it.

McDonald nods enthusiastically, reminding that the current crop of "foodie docs" probably owe their provenance to the now classic *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*.

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“That’s definitely a genre or sub-genre: the restaurant doc,” he says. “*Jiro*, when it came out, blew everywhere away — it was a juggernaut, theatrically. I’ve been looking for the next really big restaurant film, we all have ... and there haven’t been that many that have done remarkably well.”

Focused, eaglelike, as part of his role these days, on the year-round, 700-seat Hot Docs Cinema on Bloor St. W., McDonald is keenly attentive to the “commercial view,” as he calls it.

“There’s also another genre of film that does exceptionally well, which I call ‘virtual tourism,’ ” he says. “Any film about Italy or about the Camino Trail or India ... any place that people aspire to go or have gone to, and want to relive it ...”

Similarly, music and fashion documentaries do really well.

Even though it’s his business, it’s clear the extent to which it remains exceptionally personal for the guy. He’s the man who, when growing up between Toronto and Montreal, would organize his sleepovers around the old movie listings on TV (“Why are we watching old black-and-white-movies?” his friends would ask). Fast forward and he’s the fella who still gets a tingle when feeling the jangle of the key for the cinema on Bloor.

“I’ve never opened the door without giggling,” he confesses.

He sighs: “No technology has been able to replace that magical feeling of watching a film in the dark with a bunch of strangers.”

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/opinion/2018/04/27/hot-docs-dean-stays-keen-on-the-genre-after-20-years.html>

Filmmaker describes 'chilling effect' of growing up in Muslim community under FBI surveillance

Assia Boundaoui's *The Feeling of Being Watched* playing at Hot Docs festival in Toronto

CBC Radio · April 27



Assia Boundaoui, right, shows her mother and brother reading FBI documents. Their hometown of Bridgeview, Ill., became one of the largest counterterrorism investigations ever conducted in the U.S. before 9/11. (Submitted by Assia Boundaoui)

Listen26:04

It was called Operation Vulgar Betrayal — but to Assia Boundaoui and her family, it was daily life in Bridgeview, Ill.

For years, Boundaoui and other members of her predominantly Muslim Chicago suburb felt like they were being watched.

Suspected of funnelling money to international terrorist organizations, the community was the subject of one of the largest pre-9/11 counter-terrorism investigations ever conducted in the U.S. The operation yielded no terror convictions.

Boundaoui joined *As It Happens* host Carol Off in studio on Friday to discuss her documentary *The Feeling of Being Watched*, now playing at Toronto's Hot Docs festival.

Here's part of that conversation.

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 27, 2018 (2 of 5)

Did you have any idea, the degree to which your community was under surveillance, and that everybody knew?

It was something that was so ubiquitous. It was just part of our daily lives.

It was such a part of the way we grew up, that we would see cars parked on the end of the street.

Some kids grow up being warned not to talk to strangers because their parents are afraid of them getting kidnapped. Our parents were afraid of the FBI, and we were warned not to talk to the FBI.

I don't remember anyone ever telling me we were under surveillance, or the FBI suspects us. It was just something I always knew.

And what were they looking for?

They were looking for terrorism. It was a terrorism financing investigation.

They made the assumption that all of our institutions, our mosque, our charities, our schools, were one big front for terrorism, that they were raising money and sending money abroad for terrorism financing.

After 12 years of investigation, more than that, not a single person was ever convicted of anything related to terrorism in my community.

They never found that any of these charities were doing what they suspected, or these mosques were doing what they suspected, and yet these investigations continued and persisted.

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 27, 2018 (3 of 5)



A still from *The Feeling of Being Watched*, which made its international premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs festival on Thursday. (*The Feeling of Being Watched*)

But the effect was to intimidate people?

My conclusion was that, yeah.

When you put such a large and wide net around an entire community, people feel threatened, they feel targeted, and they don't understand why.

And the long-term affects of that are hyper-paranoia, fragmentation of trust within a community.

People stop associating, people stop donating to those organizations, people felt safer not going to the mosque. This really had a very chilling affect on our community.



Assia Boundaoui spreads out FBI documents in a scene from her documentary. (Submitted by Assia Boundaoui)

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 27, 2018 (4 of 5)

As you pursued this investigation — as a journalist you were very open about it, as one must be — but sinister things began to happen to you, and you didn't know if you were just being paranoid.

We were making a film about surveillance while we were under surveillance, essentially. The deeper we got into the investigation, the more paranoid I became, but I think justifiably paranoid.

I got an alert from Google. Google basically warned me that government attackers had hacked into my account. That was shocking.

All of this overt surveillance, there's nothing really secretive about it. Maybe they parked the car down the street because they wanted us to see them. Perhaps the purpose was to make people in the community paranoid, to rattle the cage, and see if any criminals come out of the woodwork.

The question I ask is: what happens when you rattle the cage and there are no criminals inside? What does that do to the people in the cage?



As It Happens host Carol Off and Assia Boundaoui in studio (As It Happens)

Have people in your community, have they seen your documentary?

Some of them have. It's kind of amazing, actually. I feel like they walked out of the screenings with their heads held high in a way.

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 27, 2018 (5 of 5)

This was a thing we whispered about and also internalized a lot of shame about.

When someone tells you "you're bad, you're bad" for such a long time, at a certain point you start to believe that, and that becomes the way you look at yourself.

And I think we needed to say, "No, there's no shame about this," to stop whispering and talk out loud about it.

There's a power in that collective story, and I think that's what we're trying to do now, get people to share these stories. And it validates their experience in a way.

People who maybe just thought, "I'm just crazy paranoid," it validated them, that no, you're not paranoid, this did happen, and it wasn't right. It shouldn't have happened.

CP24 – April 27, 2018

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Faces of Midfield Mobile Home Park fight honoured in short doc

Calgary filmmaker tracks embattled community from gorgeous gardens to shuttered homes

Rachel Ward · CBC News · Posted: Apr 27, 2018 7:00 PM MT | Last Updated: April 27



Rudy Prediger, a former resident of Midfield Mobile Home Park, was one of the most vocal opponents. (Colleen Underwood/CBC)

A tale of Calgary seniors losing their homes will be screened at a major Canadian film festival this weekend.

Eviction Notice, directed by Calgary filmmaker Laura O'Grady, features the homeowners of Midfield Mobile Home Park, which shuttered earlier this year after months of legal battles.

The mobile home park was closed by the city, which deemed the required infrastructure repairs surpassed what it could pay.

Many tenants of the park put up a fight and hired a lawyer, who unsuccessfully tried to block the evictions in court.

O'Grady spent years getting to know the residents, many of whom were seniors.

Now she's made sure their personal stories have been told.

It'll be shown at Toronto's Hot Docs film festival this weekend, and on May 4, it'll be available for viewing online by CBC Short Docs.

CBC News – April 27, 2018 (2 of 5)

O'Grady spoke with **Calgary Eyeopener** guest host Jennifer Keene on Friday ahead of the short documentary's debut.

Q: I think a lot of people here in Calgary might be familiar with the basic outline of what happened with Midfield, the decision to close the park and the residents' fight for compensation, but what angle do you cover in your documentary?

A: This story is a story about the people. What I wanted to talk about were the individuals and the lives and the reasons why their lives were in the spot they were in when I met them.



Laura O'Grady is the director of *Eviction Notice*, a short documentary about the Midfield Mobile Home Park. (Laura O'Grady)

It's very much more about the people of the community, how some of them just couldn't fight more publicly, how some of them were determined to fight publicly, why they decided to do that and all of the obstacles that were in their path and some of the sacrifices they had to make to stand up publicly against the city.

Q: Tell us why they did decide to fight the closure.

A: In the case of our central character and a friend of mine, Rudy Prediger, it was never about the money. It was about what he felt was right and what he felt was wrong.

And he just is not the kind of man that will just put up and shut up.



Rudy Prediger was one of the key residents who spoke up against the Midfield Mobile Home Park closure. (George Webber)

He felt like the community was poorly treated, that the city broke their word and he was not going to just go silently. He was going to say what he needed to say and know in his heart that he did everything he could.

Q: Did they talk about how it had changed?

A: Certainly I saw the change, even before 2012 when I went in there.

It certainly was absolutely beautiful, some of the nicest yards I've ever seen.

Most of the seniors took great pride in the upkeep of their property. There were flowers everywhere. There was a French Canadian family that had the most spectacular deck off of their home.



CBC News – April 27, 2018 (4 of 5)

The city handed out eviction notices to more than 170 trailers in 2014 because of deteriorating water and sewer lines. (Andrew Brown/CBC)

Everyone knew each other. People would drop off groceries to someone who was ill. The women would have card club games.

It was a very much a small town that I think any of us would love to live in, when your neighbours take care of you so well.

Q: What did you personally learn in making this documentary?

A: I learned the importance of community. I learned that every one of our communities has individuals that if we learn their story a bit more, maybe we would have more empathy and compassion for them.

Every person in that community had a story to tell.



All residents have now moved out of the Midfield trailer park in northeast Calgary. (Andrew Brown/CBC)

Sometimes you bring a camera around not all individuals are going to be receptive to it. But every single person I talked to, whether they wanted to be on camera or not, was kind and polite to us, and that was over six years.

Q: Where are they now, the people you interviewed from Midfield?

A: They're scattered. They're certainly not together.

CBC News – April 27, 2018 (5 of 5)

Unfortunately I just learned that one of the seniors was horribly taken advantage of because they were vulnerable, because their friends weren't around. Someone just tried to take them for considerable amount of money.

They are scattered throughout the province, really.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Azadi Moghadam — “The Broker”

“The Broker”

BY Laura Berger April 27, 2018

Azadi Moghadam was born in Tehran. She filmed her first documentary, “Kahrizak—Tajrish,” in 2015. She published Simia, a professional theater magazine, while she was a student in university.

“The Broker” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 28.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

AM: This film is about a marriage agency in Tehran run by a couple of women. Dating agencies are not common in Tehran, however, these women run their business using their own methods they created based on religious principles.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

AM: The complexity of human relationships and the clients’ [inability] to find a reliable and safe relationship. Most clients were disappointed not to find someone suitable for themselves. In addition, the methods used in the office were interesting to me. The Brokers’ faith, confidence, and perseverance in their job impressed me as well.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

AM: Well, I’m not sure about what they’ll think, but I myself was curious about two things: why are people unable to find spouses or partners on their own? Secondly, when they go to a marriage agency to find a match, will they ever feel “love”?

I guess that I hope they think about where “love” is in this whole thing.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

AM: Having a humanitarian perspective [while exploring] this complex situation was very important to me. I was surrounded by tons of details and lots of things going on in that agency, and I had to come up with a clear and relatively complete narrative.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

AM: I did not get funded. It would be very unfortunate for me if my limited budget had affected the film technically. On the other hand, I’m glad I didn’t get funded because I was free to do as I pleased in terms of narrative. I was able to shoot enough footage and develop the narrative based on what was happening in the course of shooting without any supervision. As a result, during the first few months, I filmed everything. Although I had a plot in my mind, I couldn’t predict what was going to happen in the future. Something unpredictable could become part of the main narrative, and the other narrative threads could lose their importance.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

Women and Hollywood – April 27, 2018 (2 of 2)

AM: Having my movie played at Hot Docs is very encouraging. This is a great opportunity to get in touch with a wide range of spectators and filmmakers and receive valuable feedback. I am so honored to be selected in such an important festival, especially considering I had no producer or funding.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

AM: The best piece of advice was to keep going on my career path no matter what, and to try and overcome unexpected technical difficulties even if I was left without any support. The worst advice was to direct interviews with people right in front of the camera in order to be more impressive. I took aside all the footage of interviews with main characters and clients and only used them as research material.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

AM: Try to make movies with enthusiasm and persistence. I don't believe that cinema or literature is feminine or masculine, however, the feminine voice hasn't been heard as much. The world has been interpreted in a masculine perspective and in order to reach a balance, women need to write, produce, and work more seriously and effectively.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

AM: I'm a big fan of Chantal Akerman. I adore her courage in making her films the way she does. There is a special joy for me in exploring life through watching her films. She lets the audiences go deep through the film with their minds and souls. For instance, I love the movie "News From Home" with its stunning ending.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

AM: It's very strange that the film industry is almost as old as women's rights movements, and yet, even in developed societies in terms of human and civil rights, there is so much discrimination against women when it comes to salary. And the line between work and sexual harassment is still blurry. This is a matter of civil rights, but men and women are still unequal in so many ways, such as job opportunities and salaries.

I hope #TimesUp and the whole movement of breaking the silence move towards a better mutual understanding between men and women, and don't turn into an excuse to stigmatize or take revenge on one another.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-azadi-moghadam-the-broker-43204a72ae05/?gi=de51e2f2990f>

After surviving attack, Scott Jones chronicles the 'lifelong process' of forgiveness

He was paralyzed in a brutal stabbing he calls homophobic

CBC Radio · April 27



Scott Jones is the subject of *Love, Scott*, a documentary about his journey following a knife attack he believes was motivated by homophobia. (Laura Marie Wayne/NFB)

Listen 24:19

In the upcoming documentary *Love, Scott*, Joni Mitchell's 1969 song *Both Sides, Now* speaks volumes.

For Scott Jones, the film's subject, the lyrics are obvious. "There's the time she's been hurt by love and the times that she just was so excited by her love," he said.

But for director and friend Laura Marie Wayne, it has a deeper meaning.

Jones has seen both sides now, she said — his life before and after he was attacked.



Jones travels along a wooded path in this still from *Love, Scott*. (Laura Marie Wayne/NFB)

Almost five years ago, then 27-year-old Jones was stabbed in the back and had his throat slashed outside a bar in New Glasgow, N.S. The attack paralyzed him from the waist down.

CBC Radio (The Current) – April 27, 2018 (2 of 4)

Jones, who is openly gay, says the attack was motivated by his sexuality.

Revisiting the scene *Love, Scott* explores how that attack affected Jones's life, his healing through music and the ability to forgive. It was a labour of love for the two close friends, who will mark the North American premiere of the film at Hot Docs in Toronto this weekend.

When Wayne heard that Jones had been attacked, she was studying film in Cuba, but immediately flew to be by his side. During that first week in hospital, Wayne already had her camera in tow.

"It wasn't clear that we were going to make this feature film but it was clear that the camera needed to come," she said.



Jones and Wayne speak during the filming of 'Love, Scott.' (Raúl Prado/NFB)

A year later, the pair agreed to turn her hospital footage into something more. On the one year anniversary, they would revisit the spot Jones was attacked.

"Every October for me is really difficult and I expected that to be a really hard one because it was the first year," he said. "Being there with my close friend was a much better option for me than being alone in my room and not being able to talk to anyone."

It's a heavy scene. Sitting in his car, Jones reminisces about the night: recounting the light he saw above him; describing the feeling of pavement beneath him and admitting that he checked out the man who would eventually put him in a wheelchair.

"It was important for me in a ritualistic way to go back and honour that place of great change," said Jones.

CBC Radio (The Current) – April 27, 2018 (3 of 4)



Scott Jones conducts VOX: A Choir for Social Change in Halifax, N.S. (National Film Board of Canada)

'Don't be afraid'

A musician from childhood, song is integral to Jones's healing process. "It's always been cathartic but even more so now," he said.

While in rehab, Jones formed a choir known as VOX: A Choir for Social Change.

The group's motto: "don't be afraid." It's a mantra Jones adopted in hospital.

"I knew before this attack that I lived a lot of my life in fear and that as a gay man, most of my life I'd been in the closet and I had to put on who I was in an acceptable way," he said.

"I was beginning to wake up to the fact that so many decisions were determined by fear."

Jones encourages people to acknowledge their fears because they "influence who we are and how we are with others."

Music became the tool to spread that message. In the film, VOX performs the Joni Mitchell classic *Both Sides, Now*, acting as somewhat of a call for compassion.

"As a gay person, you're always kind of activism-minded and hopefully you're wanting to make things better for queer individuals." Forgiveness is a lifelong process

The documentary has a clear social message, according to Jones. Hate crime law and how well it does — or doesn't — serve vulnerable communities should be analyzed, he said.

CBC Radio (The Current) – April 27, 2018 (4 of 4)

Jones worries it doesn't. While Shane Matheson was charged with attempted murder, no hate charges were laid.

"Having gone through that as a gay individual and saying I believe this is a hate crime and not being heard ... that kind of erases that aspect of who I am," he said.



Jones speaks to a crowd of 1,100 people. (National Film Board of Canada)

But at Matheson's sentencing, Jones forgave the man who nearly killed him and he apologized.

Forgiveness, both for his attacker and arguably, himself, is a common theme throughout the film. Eventually, Jones shares a handwritten letter addressed to his attacker.

"It was all part of a process of forgiveness for me, which I've come to realize is a lifelong process," he said.

"Since day one I've wanted to reach out to Shane and so when I'm ready, it will be sent." *This segment was written by Jason Vermes and produced by The Current's Julie Cryslar.*

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/after-surviving-attack-scott-jones-chronicles-the-lifelong-process-of-forgiveness-1.4637282>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Lindsey Cordero — “I’m Leaving Now (Ya Me Voy)”

“I’m Leaving Now (Ya Me Voy)”

BY Sophie Willard April 27, 2018

Lindsey Cordero is a Mexican filmmaker based in Brooklyn. She previously co-directed the TV documentary “Firmes, Mexicans in the Bronx” and produced “En el Séptimo Día.” “I’m Leaving Now (Ya Me Voy)” is Cordero’s feature-length directorial debut.

“I’m Leaving Now (Ya Me Voy)” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 28. The film is co-directed by Armando Croda.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

LC: “I’m leaving Now (Ya Me Voy)” is an intimate portrait of Felipe, a Mexican undocumented immigrant who has been living in Brooklyn for almost two decades, and who struggles to return home to a family he doesn’t really know. As he prepares to leave New York, a series of events start to unfold.

Felipe’s troubled because his youngest son, Cesarín, has never called him “father,” and his oldest son, Alejandro, confesses he has a huge debt with the bank, and is in danger of losing the family’s home. Feeling lonely and betrayed by his family, an unexpected love affair makes him rethink the true meaning of family and responsibility.

Throughout the documentary Felipe is confronted with many difficult questions: does his family really want him to come back home? Is Felipe a respected father figure, or is his family using him for the money?

W&H: What drew you to this story?

LC: Armando and I would often see Felipe in the neighborhood pulling his cart filled with cans and bottles wearing a faded velvet Mariachi hat with falling sequins, singing popular Mexican songs. Also being from Mexico, we became friends, and were always intrigued and captivated by his charisma and sense of humor.

Felipe would see us with our camera gear and ask if we could do a video to send to his family so they could see what his life is like in New York. We did a video of Felipe singing “Serenata Sin Luna” and uploaded it to YouTube for his family to watch, and started getting acquainted with them.

At first it never occurred to us to do a longer project with Felipe because every time we saw him he would tell us he was going back to Mexico the next month or so. Weeks, months, and years passed, and we kept running into him.

Eventually we asked Felipe what was delaying his trip back home, and that was the question that led to this project: will Felipe ever be able to go back home? We immediately saw that this was not only a question that sat at the very center of Felipe’s story, but also at the center of every undocumented worker struggling in often faraway lands to make a better life for the families back home.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

LC: I hope that through the story of Felipe audiences will start to have a better understanding of the emotional toil and sacrifice that is at the heart of the undocumented workers that harvest our vegetables, cook our food, build, and clean our cities, and take care of our kids and elderly.

That audiences might reflect on themes and questions confronted by these workers on a daily basis—about the nature of home and belonging, the true personal costs incurred to make a life for themselves, and for their families back home. Economic progress is possible but what is the emotional toll they must pay in return?

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

Women and Hollywood – April 27, 2018 (2 of 3)

LC: From the very beginning Armando and I knew we wanted to make an observational film with no interviews, but because this is our first feature documentary, we also wanted to experiment with different techniques and approaches during the production process.

During the edit, one of the biggest challenges we faced was trying to find a unified style and approach for the film. At one point we even considered including the filmmaker—myself—in the film, interacting with the film's subject—Felipe—but I am very glad we didn't because Felipe's story was strong enough to stand alone and speak for itself, and adding these elements took away from the power of his story.

We are also a very small team, and in the initial stages we edited various versions of the film to raise money and grant applications. At one point I felt my vision was contaminated and restricted to the same sequences and structures so it was very refreshing to collaborate with our writer, Josh Alexander, who structured the story, and made us fall in love with the material again, and see the magic and potential in scenes we would have never considered.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

LC: I'm a location sound recordist, and Armando is a DP. We have our own equipment so it was very easy for us to pick up and film any day of the week. That helped a great deal in keeping the production costs low. We were able to take the film all the way through production, filming, editing, and post-production with very limited equity funding, relying on in-kind services, and free funds raised through family and friends.

In 2015 we were awarded with \$6,000 by the Princess Grace Foundation Film Honorarium. With that money we bought a couple of hard drives for the film, and put the rest in a bank account, and never touched it until we were applying to festivals and in post-production.

In 2016 the project won the Docs Forum Pitch Competition at DocsMx [International Documentary Film Festival of Mexico City], and we were invited to participate in the upcoming DocuLab at the 2017 Guadalajara International Film Festival where we won in-kind color correction services at Cine Color in Mexico City.

This film was made on a very limited budget with a lot of in-kind services, and support of other film professionals who fell in love with Felipe for all the same reasons we did.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

LC: We are thrilled and honored to have our film play at Hot Docs. This is very important for us because it's our first feature film, and to have it participate in the Mexican sidebar—along with other great Mexican filmmakers—is very rewarding.

There is also a big Mexican community living in Toronto, so we hope our film will resonate with them. And we are also very excited to share our film with audiences in Toronto, and listen to their impressions and feedback.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

LC: I once saw Alan Berliner at the Lincoln Center presenting his documentary "First Cousin Once Removed," and I remember him saying: "The only way to good ideas is through bad ideas." This has stuck with me forever, and taught me not to be afraid to express my ideas—no matter how good or bad they are, it helps the creativity flow.

I guess then a bad piece of advice would be, "That's a bad idea; it's not going to work." Sometimes you have to fight for your bad ideas, and other times you just gotta let it go.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

LC: I constantly remind myself: never doubt yourself, and go for it no matter how hard it seems, and how long it takes. You didn't come this far to only get this far.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

LC: Last year I saw Afghan filmmaker Shahrbano Sadat's film "Wolf and Sheep." It's ethnographic approach really resonated with me. It's a hybrid docudrama infused with magical

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realism of local folk tales about a group of shepherd children living in a place out of time, in the mountains of Afghanistan.

It was very powerful for me to witness the children's spontaneous conversations, free of taboo because of their age; [it] reveals so much about the social dynamics and gender roles in their community. The visual poetry of this remote yet contemporary shepherd community—its loose and revealing narrative threads, and slow yet immersive pacing are all very inspiring to me and my approach to documentary.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

LC: I think the movement is very timely. It's important to see more and more women perform in roles where we don't usually see ourselves—to stop thinking it's unusual, and to start feeling it's only natural.

It's also empowering to see that the movement has transcended the Hollywood glamour and elitist groups to make this a universal struggle that includes all working women from all diverse backgrounds and ethnicities.

It's an issue that both women and men need to think about, talk about, and together plan for more meaningful and inclusive solutions.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Christina D. King and Elizabeth A. Castle — “Warrior Women”

“Warrior Women”

BY Sophie Willard April 27, 2018

Christina D. King is a member of the Seminole Tribe of Oklahoma whose work across commercials, documentary, film, and television focuses on human rights issues, civic engagement through storytelling, and democratizing filmmaker opportunities for minority voices. She has produced “We The Animals,” “This May Be The Last Time,” “Capitalism: A Love Story,” and more. “Warrior Women” is her directorial debut.

Elizabeth A. Castle is a scholar, activist, and media maker, and the author of the book “Women were the Backbone, Men were the Jawbone: Native Women’s Activism in the Red Power Movement,” the research for which inspired “Warrior Women,” which is Castle’s directorial debut.

“Warrior Women” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 28.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

CK&EC: “Warrior Women” is the story of American Indian Movement (AIM) leader Madonna Thunder Hawk, who cultivated a rag-tag gang of activist children—including her daughter Marcy—into the We Will Remember Survival Group as a Native alternative to government-run boarding schools.

Their deep involvement with The Movement fight for Native rights made them more comrades than mother-daughter. Today, with Marcy now a mother herself, both women are still at the forefront of Native issues, fighting against the environmental devastation of the Dakota Access Pipeline, and for indigenous cultural values.

Through their story, the film explores what it means to balance a movement with motherhood, and how activist legacies are passed down from generation to generation in the face of a government that has continually met Native resistance with mass violence.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

CK&EC: The AIM fight for indigenous rights and cultural revitalization that began in the late 1960s, and sort of peaked in the social conscious during the 1970s with high-profile coverage of the group’s 71 day standoff with the FBI at Wounded Knee, was pretty well documented for the time. But the story-at-large about how that movement operated internally, and who the major players were was completely written by a male-dominated press.

To paraphrase Madonna Thunder Hawk: everyone ran around and tried to find who most looked like a “warrior.” The media was looking for a symbol that made sense to their idea of power at the time. They were basically looking for the Native counterpart to Ford, and then Nixon. In doing so they missed the reality of how The Movement was actually organized, and ran on a community level: with women, and entire families, being a big part of that.

This wasn’t so different from what has happened since invasion in 1492. The English came to the Americas, and once contact with indigenous peoples became inevitable, they would only engage in a context that was Eurocentric: Who is your (brown) king? Who is your chief? But it was then, and is now, inconceivable to indigenous women that they wouldn’t play a role in politics.

Uncovering that new side to what was ignored, and thus is not widely known about The Movement, was movie enough. When oral history clips of both Madonna Thunder Hawk, and her daughter, Marcy, talking about those movement days separately came up, a much richer space of how activist legacies are passed between generations in families opened up.

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Marcy speaks with both honesty about sharing her mom with a movement, and reverence for the role her mom had in The Movement—the mother/daughter aspect, and by extension the role of families and communities in Red Power was just something that had to be explored at that point.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

CK&EC: We just want everyone to leave the theater infused with a sense of radical self empowerment, and the inevitability of their own strength. This goes for all audiences—both indigenous and ally audience, because we're certainly in a time where many, many people feel helpless and depressed economically, socially, politically, and spiritually.

For indigenous audiences, specifically, we want people to think about the power that flows in our blood. We hope the feeling of unapologetic Indian-ness powers our Native relatives through whatever they need it for—personally or in their community. If you think about it, we're all descendants of fighters—of the best of the best—or we wouldn't even be here. As Natives, we're the descendants of every man, woman, and child who refused to die when the U.S. government was seeking their eradication. That's powerful blood.

We'd also like people to realize [that] the value of the celebrity revolutionary image is over-valued. That it's communities of everyone—from the children to the grandmas, and everyone in between—that makes change. And you don't need anyone's permission to empower yourself. You don't need non-profit status and you don't need an organizing prospectus. You just have to care enough to do the work. And if our relatives could do it 40 years ago without all of the ways of communicating and organizing we have now, you can do it too.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

CK&EC: Definitely decolonizing our filmmaking voice! At first we were very invested in using vérité to tell the story, because that's the film language we knew best. But for this particular story, we found it very limiting in conveying the nuances of an indigenous worldview in ways that do not make it easy for viewers to substitute preconceived notions or stereotypes for real connection and understanding. But broadcasters and audiences really do yearn in an almost fetishistic way for a particular lens in viewing Native American life, so we struggled for quite a

while in the wrong framework before we gained the confidence to break form and just do what felt right stylistically for our voices.

We were so lucky to have the support and input of a lot of very accomplished filmmakers we love and trust but at the end of the day, we came to realize we were still the best people in the room to tell this story due to our unique perspective.

This film is a directing debut for both of us, so we wasted a lot of time thinking, “well, so-and-so makes great films, and has so many awards, so they must know best,” when in reality those award winning films came from such a different perspective than we have. A lot of advice was taking the film further from where it needed to be.

Working with Madonna Thunder Hawk as a subject was also quite a journey because she's an enthusiastic collaborator but a reluctant participant. At least in this very front-facing way that was never her thing. She calls it “chasing the mic.” She'd rather be making things happen behind the scenes politically than getting media attention. But that's what we loved about her! She wasn't inclined to take credit for anything—in fact by doing so she would be undermining her status in grassroots organizing—but she was, and still is, a very active force in fighting for indigenous rights on many, many levels.

Madonna is a very complex woman, who is hard to get at emotionally—not necessarily the easiest person to carry a film. But we have far too many films where filmmakers go find an emotionally compromised Indian, and make a real banger of a dramatic film that plays well to outsiders—but those aren't films about Indians. They're films about the effects of settler

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colonialism, so it was important to us to keep working at ways to convey this force that is Madonna Thunder Hawk.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

CK&EC: This film is a directing debut for both of us, but fortunately half of our team is a producer with experience raising funds for films, so while we got a lot of rejections, we eventually ended up with a dream team of partners. Vision Maker Media came in very early with significant funds, which was a vote of confidence that really made our eventual co-production with ITVS even possible.

We were pretty set until we decided to actually re-make the film when it was at a fine cut stage. It was an incredibly hard decision since we were both so burned out already but we're both incredibly glad we took a step back.

To move forward with re-imagining and re-cutting a lot of the film, we had amazing grant partners in the Sundance Doc Fund, Firelight Films Next-Step Fund, Chicken and Egg Pictures, and the Sundance Native Lab. We will be forever humbled and grateful that those organizations saw what we were trying to do, and stepped up to give us the financial runway to take another swing.

At first we were incredibly embarrassed to be going to people asking for more money, but through some amazing mentors, we learned how to be unapologetic about our needs. We took a big break between the first cut of the film, and going out and asking for re-do money.

During that break, we worked hard on our new vision but we worked just as hard on ourselves to kind of learn what a lot of male filmmakers seem to know intuitively: we learned to take up space. We learned to re-cast "failures" as an inevitable part of the process.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

CK&EC: Though anywhere we premiere is Native land, it is particularly special because of the rich presence of indigenous peoples in Toronto. That's so exciting to us because there are so many conversations we can have there that we can't have at someplace like Berlin or Cannes. There's also a bit of a gap between Indigenous-minded films being made right now and what festivals want to program. Festivals tend to program films that stick to more popular formulas for docs, but they're not necessarily the best modes of conveying a Fourth World point of view. So, we're excited that we made something that feels true to our voice, and that a mainstream festival like Hot Docs has responded to it. It's so encouraging.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

CK&EC: The best: "Do what hurts less." Which isn't to say making a documentary doesn't require an insane amount of work, but we personally got so entrenched in working at a deficit that we forgot how to not be in tapped-out crisis mode. When someone said that to us six years into making our film, it was like we had been given permission to start backing off the martyrdom treadmill.

The worst: Graduating with a degree in Film Studies, there was definitely encouragement from school advisors that when going out into the workforce, we should hide qualities that would be considered more feminine. [We were told] to be serious, wear muted colors, don't wear skirts, don't be emotional—it's not appropriate to gush or say you "love" a movie.

This kind of policing was actually probably very good advice for the realities of the workplace at the time but it's going in the "worst" column because we know it's B.S. now. Feminine energy should not be considered a handicap.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

CK&EC: Challenge yourself to think bigger and higher, and ask for it. So often we start to edit and self limit ourselves to adjust for the patriarchal narrative before there's even pushback.

Sometimes we perpetuate limitations because we expect them. I'm not saying you'll get that bigger budget or you'll get that Russian arm on a car shot—but try to see how things go if you

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approach your work with the expectation of getting a “yes.” If the answer is “no,” at least we’re building a community of women creatives who are pushing for more, and that can add up to a sea change.

Don’t be afraid to lift as you climb, and actively and aggressively support the work of other women and people of color by hiring them for your crew. Smash the—heteronormative, white supremacist, colonial—patriarchy; don’t reinforce it by supporting toxic masculinity in values or behavior just because it has been what has been rewarded.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

CK&EC: Alma Har’el is just the end all. “Bombay Beach” is so incredible on every level. It is such a perfect balance of real and surreal that the greatest truths come out of the more performative stuff. And you never feel like these kids from this really economically and spiritually depressed place are being manipulated in any way because the direction comes from such a place of love and human bonding. How rare is it you get to actually see the subjects appearing to gather strength from the process of making the film? Incredible.

And of course she shot it on a 2-chip camera from Best Buy or something like that, and it’s still one of the most striking docs ever. It’s gorgeous. Come to think of it, her filmmaking is very indigenous in many ways—atemporal, valuing character over biography, and not afraid to break or experiment with form to catch the spirit of the space her subjects occupy.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

CK&EC: It can be really exhausting to navigate the daily trauma of harassment, and find a way to move forward with the larger goals of creating art and important media that will change the world. However, we have to hold simultaneously the fact that violence against women—from harassment at work to actual murder—is all part of the struggle. So when we have the chance to draw connections from #TimesUp to #MMIW we must do that. There is an epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (#MMIW) across North America that has to be recognized as interconnected when we spotlight violations of women.

So, #MMIW is the hashtag we are concerned with. It’s not that we aren’t concerned with #TimesUp—it’s that we can’t achieve liberation and equity if it doesn’t also address all women who need justice.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Irene Lusztig— “Yours in Sisterhood”

“Yours in Sisterhood”

BY Beandrea July April 27, 2018

Irene Lusztig is a filmmaker whose work has been screened around the world, including at the Berlinale and MoMA, and on television in Europe, Taiwan, and the U.S. Her credits include her feature-length debut “Reconstruction,” “The Motherhood Archives,” and “The Samantha Smith Project.” She teaches filmmaking at UC Santa Cruz where she is Associate Professor of Film and Digital Media.

“Yours in Sisterhood” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 28.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

IL: “Yours in Sisterhood” is based on the thousands of letters that were sent to the editor of Ms. Magazine—the first mainstream feminist magazine in the U.S.—in the 1970s. I spent a summer reading this amazing archive of '70s feminist voices. The letters are about an incredibly diverse range of issues and were written by an equally diverse range of writers of all ages backgrounds from across the U.S.

I spent two and a half years traveling around the U.S. inviting strangers in 32 states to participate in the project by reading aloud and responding to the letters sent from their hometown. The film that has emerged from this process is a kind of collective portrait of feminist conversation in the U.S. from forty years ago and today.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

IL: The film holds a multitude of stories, people, places, ideas, and feminisms, and this richness is precisely what drew me to both the original archive of letters and to the methods I developed for making the project.

As a filmmaker, I'm interested in the complex and messy. I rarely set out to tell a straightforward story with a beginning, middle, and end, but instead I aim to create an open space where a viewer can spend time thinking, questioning, and exploring.

That said, I did feel very drawn to thinking about '70s feminism in all of its messy complexity, to the energy that I felt reading all of those letters in the archive, and to the amazing ways that feminist organizers were able to create radical spaces of conversation.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

IL: I hope people are thinking hard about lots of big ideas: intergenerational feminism, the meaning and potential of intimate conversation and public discourse, the shifting relationship between history and the present, the importance of listening across difference to perspectives that diverge from your own, time travel, space, geography, landscape, embodiment, and empathy.

My favorite films are films that take days or weeks to digest—where I am still drawing out new meanings and connections a long time afterwards.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

IL: It was a huge challenge to make this film with almost no significant funding. When you get funding it makes you feel confident and it gives you permission to keep following your vision—you know you have the support of institutions that trust you and your ideas. I struggled with rejection after rejection, and really had to make my own network of support to keep moving forward with the project.

Ultimately, though, I felt incredibly supported and trusted by the hundreds of strangers who volunteered to participate in the project. The more people I met and filmed with, the more I had

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a powerful sense of belief in the work that we were doing together and in the incredible urgency of having these conversations about feminism right now, and that energy is what carried the project forward.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

IL: It was extremely difficult and discouraging to find any funding as I was making the project. The film got rejected by every major grant in the U.S. Feminist work and work that centers women's voices is always very difficult to fund. And feminist work that is also stylistically unconventional, formally challenging, or that doesn't tell an easy-to-digest story with a single main character is even harder to fund.

For most of the four years of making the project, I cobbled together tiny amounts of research funding from the university where I teach—just a few thousand dollars a year—plus a couple of very local artist grants. I produced, researched, operated the camera, and edited the project myself. I worked with a tiny crew—just one other person at the time—and hired my recent students.

I'm fortunate to have a full-time university teaching job, so I didn't need to raise money to pay myself. The whole project was made for a fraction of what a normal budget would look like for a feature length film with 120 shooting days and a full year of editing.

I did have to do an emergency crowdfunding campaign at the very end of my project. I found out the film had gotten into Berlin just as I got rejected from the final two grants I had applied for. I was completely out of money, and I did need a bigger chunk of money for the final round of finishing post-production that I wasn't able to do by myself. I raised this money literally during the final few weeks, as I was also finishing and mastering the film for Berlin.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

IL: I made this film with very little help in a very scrappy, intimate, DIY, and small-scale way. So I expected the film to also be very difficult to screen and to ultimately screen in intimate, small, alternative venues. So it's been such an amazing surprise to be invited to show this film at top international festivals like the Berlinale and Hot Docs.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

IL: Worst advice: One of my undergrad film teachers once told me that I needed to be less respectful and to worry less about being ethical if I ever wanted to become an interesting filmmaker. I think that was bad advice.

Best advice: A friend told me recently to always ask for something three times. I'm naturally shy and a bad self-promoter, so I like having a rule that gives me permission to ask again even when the first answer is a no or silence.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

IL: To find or create a supportive community of friends, peers, and like-minded filmmakers who take your ambitions seriously even when the rest of the world doesn't. And also to be really active in taking or making the space for the kinds of conversations that feel important to you: organize meetings, start a microcinema, film collective or reading group, be a programmer/filmmaker, create the context for the dialogue that you want to see in the world. Don't wait to be discovered or to get invited to show your work!

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

IL: I can list films by women that I love for days; I teach entire courses where I mostly show films by women. An older woman-directed film that I love and that was a big influence on this project is the collectively-produced 1971 film "The Woman's Film," by the San Francisco Newsreel Collective. It's a political, feminist film that still feels incredibly radical and fresh today. It's hard to believe it was made almost fifty years ago.

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Like “Yours in Sisterhood,” it’s a film that is all about women talking to other women. It comes out of the methods of consciousness raising groups, and in fact much of it was filmed in consciousness raising groups. It’s an amazing film.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

IL: It’s long overdue. While it’s of course exciting that these conversation are taking such a big, public forum, women have been talking among themselves about these issues for so many years. Women were talking about the exact same issues in the ’70s in the letters they sent to Ms. Magazine. It’s frustrating that these problems have endured for such a long time despite the incredible organizing and visibility work done by feminist activists in the ’70s.

I think that reveals the profoundly structural nature of the inequality that is threaded through all of our institutions and industries—firing a few powerful men and handing a microphone to a few powerful Hollywood actresses is just barely the beginning of the conversation we actually need to have.

And that conversation is not just about women—it’s about people of color, it’s about disability and illness, it’s about gender nonconforming people and much more. It’s important to build coalitions across marginalized identities rather than to push forward the visibility of one group at the expense of others.

I would love to see much more radical change around who is given resources to make work, what voices, stories, and visual forms are onscreen, and how we teach filmmaking in schools, as film schools play a huge role in perpetuating gender disparities in the film industry.

I hope that one day we no longer need women’s film blogs, “focus on women” festival sidebars, women’s film festivals, screening series, and female filmmaker funding initiatives because women and women’s issues will simply have equal representation and support in all of our cultural spaces.

CTV – April 27, 2018



FULL EPISODES SCHEDULE

The life and legacy of late fashion designer Alexander McQueen

CTV | April 27, 2018



He is one of the most iconic fashion visionaries of our time. We're talking about Alexander McQueen.

From a boy growing up in east London, he went on to become the head of French fashion house Givenchy and established his own clothing empire. Now, a new film is looking at the life of the late fashion mogul.

It's called *McQueen* and it's screening at Hot Docs (you can find screening info on the [Hot Docs website](#)). Anne-Marie sat down with filmmakers Ian Bonhote and Peter Ettedgui.

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<https://www.ctv.ca/YourMorning/Articles/April-2018/The-life-and-legacy-of-late-fashion-designer-Alexa>

'Accountant of Auschwitz' doc examines race to prosecute aging Nazis

Amanda Coletta, CTVNews.ca

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As the prisoners disembarked from the trains that took them to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Nazi-occupied Poland, a young, low-ranking S.S. guard named Oskar Groening waited for them on the platform.

He was an accountant of sorts. Tasked with retrieving their luggage and belongings, Groening also confiscated their money, recorded the amounts in a ledger and then sent it to headquarters in Berlin.

Seven decades after the liberation of the camp, Groening—then a frail, 93-year-old man—was charged and convicted by a court in Lüneburg, Germany, for being an accessory in the murder of 300,000 mostly Hungarian Jews from May to July 1944, and sentenced to four years in prison.



Former SS guard Oskar Groening waits for the start of the trial against him in Lüneburg, northern Germany, Wednesday, April 29, 2015. (Philipp Schulze/Pool Photo via AP)

His 2015 prosecution and the recent efforts to bring other aging former Nazis to justice is the subject of the Canadian documentary "Accountant of Auschwitz," set to debut Sunday at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Germany was reluctant to prosecute former Nazis, which meant the vast majority of them were never prosecuted.

The country was in ruins, and the lawyers and judges who would have been responsible for initiating these criminal proceedings were often former Nazis themselves, Ricki Gurwitz, the documentary's producer, told CTV News Channel.

"They were sitting in judgement of themselves," she said. "The ones they did prosecute were the most sadistic, the ones who poured Zyklon B into the gas chambers."

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A narrow legal framework for trying Nazis required prosecutors to prove both that the accused was directly involved in the killing of a specific victim, and that the killing was motivated by racial hatred.

But in 2009, the framework changed. Suddenly, just being present at a death camp could be grounds for prosecution.

The problem was that many Nazis were dead or too sick to stand trial. Groening was alive and considered to be healthy enough.

“In previous trials, most Nazis said that they were just following orders or they just sat there and didn’t speak,” Matt Shoychet, the documentary’s director told CTV’s Your Morning.

Groening was different.

“He said, ‘I was there. I saw the killing pits. I was there,’” Shoychet said.

Some wondered whether such an elderly man should have been brought to trial in the first place. But the judge disagreed, finding that, while there was no evidence that Groening actually killed anyone, he knew what was happening and his actions indicated complicity.

Groening died in March 2018, before he served any of his prison sentence.

Gurwitz said that the documentary holds contemporary lessons.

“The Holocaust is fading from memory and from textbooks in schools,” she said. “When you see what’s going on in Syria and what’s going on around the world, the slogan of ‘never again’ is almost meaningless.”

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/entertainment/accountant-of-auschwitz-doc-examines-race-to-prosecute-aging-nazis-1.3905469>

My first Harvey Weinstein movie missed some important details. So I made another

By **BARRY AVRICH**Special to the Star
Fri., April 27, 2018

Documentarian Barry Avrich had special cause to wince when the wave of sexual-misconduct allegations against famed producer Harvey Weinstein arrived last fall.

His 2011 doc Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Story was meant to show how the subject pursued his agenda in Hollywood, but it now seems there was a very large untold aspect of the story. As the #MeToo allegations about men in Hollywood continue to come in, Avrich has a new film — The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret — on what you might say is a closely related topic: sexual misconduct in show business. It premieres Saturday at Toronto's Hot Docs festival.

Avrich describes looking back at creating Unauthorized, knowing now what he didn't know then.

When you spend your life making films about larger-than-life personalities, you can discover there is a darkness hidden beneath the lacquered veneer of fame. In 2005, during production on *The Last Mogul*, a documentary about Universal Studios icon Lew Wasserman, I uncovered alarming connections to the mafia. A later film on famed Vanity Fair columnist Dominick Dunne exposed certain odd fetishes.

Sometimes, the secrets are so well hidden by a malicious design that you might not ever expose the real truth.

When I made my first film on Harvey Weinstein in 2011, many said it would be career suicide — possibly even personally dangerous. Others warned me that the powerful producer would never allow the film to get distribution. I did not fear Harvey, though we did exchange close to a dozen emails, and aggressive calls in which he asked me not to make the film. He even suggested that Quentin Tarantino would be chronicling his life, so I need not bother.

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While many of Weinstein's business principles and strategies redefined industry practices, his style and approach was as legendary as it was often degrading and deplorable. And yet he gave the world *Pulp Fiction*, *The King's Speech*, *Life is Beautiful*, *Shakespeare In Love*, *Chicago* and *The English Patient*, as well as dozens of other indie film classics.

While many came forward to tell me their stories about working with Weinstein, there were no serious alarm bells beyond his explosive temper and need for control that foreshadowed the epic scandal to come seven years later. Just as I was wrapping up production, two final interview subjects, a producer and a journalist, hinted about a more salacious side to the Harvey Weinstein story. I asked them to confirm their accounts on camera and they refused. He was too powerful to take on. I followed up with a few highly placed calls to see what I could find and I hit a wall. Without proof or confirmation of what dark behaviour they were alluding to, it was just a haunting whiff of unsubstantiated rumours that were impossible to document in a film. What was Harvey hiding?

What happened next was a classic Weinstein power move that I never saw coming. During distributor screenings at the Toronto International Film Festival, American indie distributor IFC Films aggressively approached me to screen the film and subsequently made a generous offer to buy it. I never imagined that IFC, with close ties to Weinstein, would demand edits that watered down his behaviour, which included his obsession with reshooting a sex scene. IFC ultimately would bury the film in the U.S. You needed a Saint Bernard in a blizzard to find it.

Fast forward seven years and life for Weinstein has taken a very bad turn. Many roller-coaster business cycles and film flops had weakened his influence, and now many women felt brave enough to unleash a tsunami of sexual harassment charges against him. Weinstein had become the Hollywood poster boy for male misconduct, and things would only get worse. Within weeks, the entire industry was being gutted by new assault and harassment accusations as the #MeToo movement gained steam. Powerful and successful men — including Louis C.K., Kevin Spacey, James Toback and many more — saw their career prospects shrivel up.

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I wanted to uncover and document what was driving this revolution. Was Weinstein finished for good? Did powerful political players and studios cover up his behaviour? Was Hollywood fuelled by hypocrisy and fear?

I immediately approached IFC, which still holds the rights to my original film, and suggested we go back and do a deeper dive on the subject. Let's give many of the women who had the strength to come forward a voice. The response was blunt: "We have no interest in this story and have elected to take the high road."

Screw IFC. I would make a new film equipped with the right ammunition. *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* features brave interviews with many women who had the courage to rise up and speak — including TV reporter Lauren Sivan, actress Melissa Sagemiller and Woody Allen accuser Dylan Farrow — plus former employees who witnessed the depravity, and the journalists that kept the flame burning.

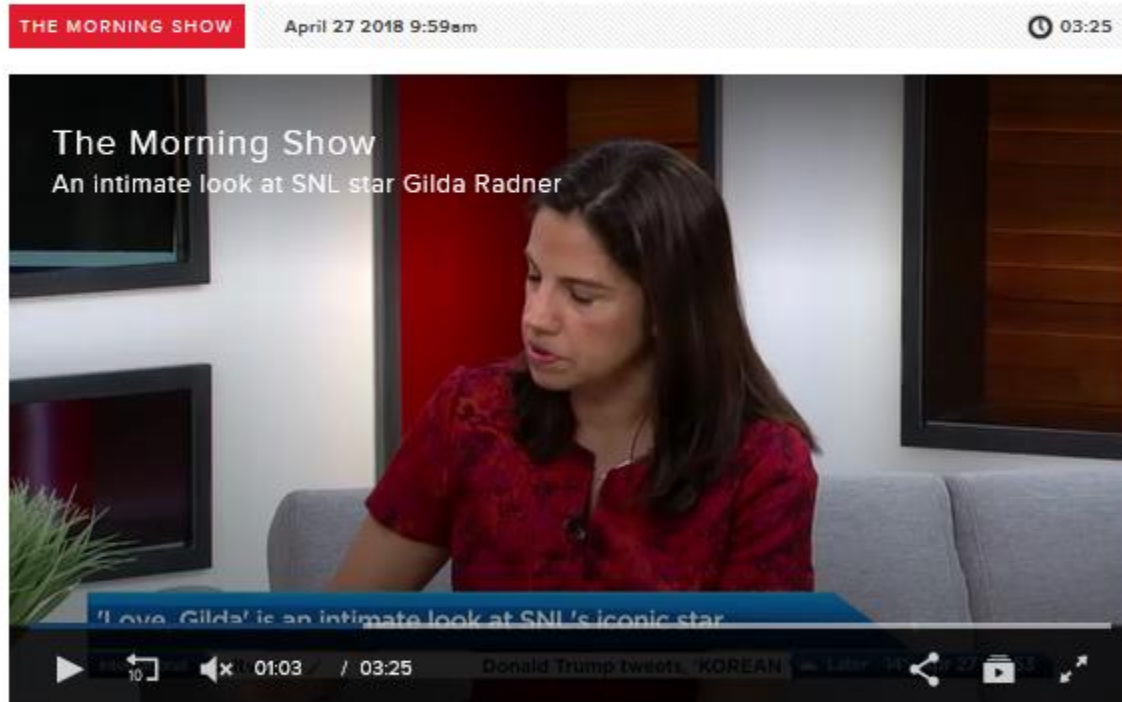
I wanted to capture an era in Hollywood that will create change for many industries not just Hollywood. Despite the fear of critics looking for some revelatory exposé on new predators, I am proud of *The Reckoning* as it was designed to keep the debate going in a social-media-driven world where the public becomes quickly bored with a rapid news cycle.

It took the downfall of one man for an industry that looked the other way to start correcting its course — thanks largely to the public outcry and media scrutiny of Hollywood, a place obsessed with its own image. Without that kind of external pressure, we might never see such change on Wall Street, Silicon Valley and perhaps Washington.

The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret will screen on Saturday, April 28, at 1:00 p.m. at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, featuring an extended post-screening Q&A with special guest subjects, and on Saturday, May 5, at 6:00 p.m. at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/opinion/2018/04/27/my-first-harvey-weinstein-movie-missed-some-important-details-so-i-made-another.html>

Global News – April 27, 2018



An intimate look at SNL star Gilda Radner

Documentarian Lisa D'Apolito talks about Love, Gilda, playing at Hot Docs

<https://globalnews.ca/video/4172280/an-intimate-look-at-snl-star-gilda-radner>

Barry Avrich on what he knew, when, while making his first Weinstein doc

JOHANNA SCHNELLER
SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL
PUBLISHED APRIL 26, 2018UPDATED APRIL 27, 2018

Barry Avrich, the Montreal-born filmmaker, walked away from his 2011 documentary *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project* “a little haunted” by what his film didn’t say about the infamous mogul. The Weinstein he depicted was both a genius who’d earned fistfuls of Oscars for the films he made at Miramax and The Weinstein Company (TWC), and a bully with a tyrannical temper. But he wasn’t what he is now known to be: an alleged serial sexual predator, and the subject of criminal investigations in London, New York and Los Angeles.

So when the Weinstein scandal broke in October, 2017, Avrich called *Unauthorized*’s distributor, IFC films, to suggest a re-edit. IFC’s co-president, Jonathan Sehring, turned him down. (Avrich has long suspected that IFC, which had a fruitful relationship with Weinstein, bought his film in order to bury it; they gave it a tepid release. Or as Avrich puts it, “You need a St. Bernard to find it.”) Then the scandal widened to include other alleged predators, the #MeToo movement exploded and Avrich decided, “This is an extraordinary time in history. I want to document it, immortalize the debate and keep it moving.”



Dylan Farrow in *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*.

BARRY AVRICH

The resulting film is *The Reckoning: Hollywood’s Worst Kept Secret*, which will have a splashy premiere on Saturday afternoon at Toronto’s Hot Docs festival, with some of the film’s whistle-blowers in attendance. It features riveting interviews with, among others, Dylan Farrow, whose allegations against her father, Woody Allen, were investigated and dismissed; and Marie Henein, who successfully represented Jian Ghomeshi and is now representing Jane Doe, the anonymous Canadian actress and Weinstein accuser who is suing not just Weinstein himself, but also TWC and its parent company, Disney.

The Globe and Mail – April 27, 2018 (2 of 3)

That's the official story of Avrigh's film, and it's a good one, delivered over a lovely lunch at Toronto's Hazelton Hotel, where four different bigwigs pop by our table to shake Avrigh's hand. Avrigh, 54, is whip-smart, a dogged worker and an expert raconteur. But in his own book, *Moguls, Monsters and Madmen: An Uncensored Life in Show Business*, Avrigh writes that he once reassured Weinstein about *Unauthorized* thusly: "Harvey, I'm not telling the stories that maybe you think I'm telling. People have told me some salacious stories, but I'm not going down that road. This is a film about you and your movies, so you have nothing to worry about."

So I have to ask: What did Avrigh really know about Weinstein, and when did he know it?

His answer: While he was filming, a few of his subjects, journalists and Weinstein employees asked him off the record, "Are you going to talk about Harvey and the women, the sexual harassment, the payoffs?"

Avrich replied, "Talk to me."

Nobody would. Avrigh reached out to some alleged victims; none returned his calls.

"Harvey was still powerful," Avrigh says now. "I wasn't hearing 'rape.' It did bother me that I knew about it. But what can I say in a documentary if nobody's going to go on the record?"

Fair enough. But in *The Reckoning*, one of Avrigh's subjects refers to "the inertia of self-interest" – too many people in the media had too many deals with Weinstein, or made too much money from him, to expose him. Last October, a mere 72 hours before the reporters Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey published their first bombshell story in *The New York Times*, *The Weinstein Company* had bought Avrigh's next documentary. (Called *Prosecuting Evil*, it's about Benjamin Ferencz, now 98, the United States' chief prosecutor in the Nuremberg Nazi trials.) Could Avrigh have been similarly self-interested?

"Unbelievable timing, I know," he replies. "But at that point, we still didn't know the story. And how many independent distributors are out there? A lot of people – John Irving, James Ivory – have told me they held their nose to work with Harvey. But he was a great marketer, and he won Oscars for people. He came at me aggressively. He said, 'This Holocaust film touches me.' They gave me a big cheque."

Mere days later, Weinstein was fired, his company was in lockdown, and Avrigh had to pull a Harvey-esque move to get *Prosecuting Evil*, which was in mid-production, back. His lawyer wrote a letter to TWC. The return letter read, essentially, "No way." So Avrigh called David Glasser, who was COO of TWC (but has since been fired).

"I said, 'You don't know what I know, and you don't know what I don't know,'" Avrigh recalls. "You're in a precarious position. I suggest you give me the film back."

He grins. "It was a mob move, but it worked."

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The CBC has since bought the rights to Prosecuting Evil. Avrigh hopes to release it this fall, after a private screening at the International Criminal Court at The Hague, which Ferencz helped to establish. “Out of all my films, I’m the proudest of it,” Avrigh says.

For *The Reckoning*, Avrigh says he deliberately didn’t reach out to Weinstein’s A-list actress accusers, such as Gwyneth Paltrow, Angelina Jolie and Salma Hayek. “I wanted women who had stories you’d never heard from,” he says, including Lauren Sivan, the actress and Fox News anchor who tells her first-person account of Weinstein’s infamous potted plant incident. “And some people were surrounded by book deals and other projects. This had to be done quickly. I wanted to be the first.” (He did ask Rose McGowan, but she was launching her series *Brave*, and couldn’t make the timing work.)

Farrow had never given an on-camera interview before. Avrigh spent three hours on the phone convincing her, and then half a day filming her. Though he was initially conflicted – “I grew up reciting Woody Allen records in front of my relatives,” he says – he now believes her story “top to bottom.”

Henein was another juicy get. “She’s a fascinating character,” Avrigh says, “She comes off the Ghomeshi case and it’s a victory, and at the same time, is she on the right side of history?” So did Henein agree to be in his film in some part to rehabilitate herself in the eyes of other women? Avrigh isn’t saying.

What he will say: He thinks the #TimesUp discussion now needs to focus on revamping workplace culture, with specific laws and codes. He hopes the public doesn’t get bored before that happens. He’s hearing that talent agencies and studios are making positive changes. “But Hollywood also loves a comeback,” he says. “I think those who’ve done a mea culpa, like Louis C.K., may still have a career.”

As for Weinstein, he knew about *The Reckoning*. Avrigh “fantasized about an Eliot Spitzer thing, where Harvey would call and say, ‘Let me go on the record,’” as the scandal-wracked former New York governor did with filmmaker Alex Gibney for his 2010 documentary *Client 9: The Rise and Fall of Eliot Spitzer*. But Weinstein didn’t call, and Avrigh didn’t ask.

One final twist: *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project* is narrated by the actor Albert Schultz, the first prominent Canadian to be accused of sexual misconduct in the #TimesUp era. Avrigh blanches when I raise it. But then he tells me that a year after *Unauthorized*, he asked Schultz to narrate his next doc, *Show Stopper: The Theatrical Life of Garth Drabinsky*. Shultz’s response: “You always ask me to narrate the films about bad guys.”

Avrigh can’t help himself: It’s a good story, and it’s true.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-barry-avrigh-on-what-he-knew-when-while-making-his-first-weinstein/>

NEW DOC GOES BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE OSLO ACCORDS

By **Jordan Adler**
April 27, 2018



Mor Loushy

When Israeli filmmaker Mor Loushy was a teenager, she went to a peace rally in Tel Aviv to support the signing of the Oslo Accords. She remembers thinking that Israel was on the verge of reaching a lasting peace with the Palestinians and says that the gathering was euphoric, with tens of thousands of Israelis dancing, singing and cheering.

She also remembers a sudden moment of silence – the music stopped and the crowds soon vanished. Only when she arrived home and turned on the news did she realize that, at the end of the rally, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had been assassinated.

“We were awake all night long watching television ... everyone was crying,” Loushy says, adding that what they were mourning was not just the loss of Israel’s leader, but the prospects for peace in the Mideast. “We believed that peace is happening. (Israelis) were thinking, ‘We’re there.’ ”

These vivid memories have likely been even more prominent in recent years, as Loushy and co-director Daniel Sivan worked on *The Oslo Diaries*, a documentary that goes behind the scenes of the secret negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the early 1990s.

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The film will enjoy its national premiere at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in Toronto. It screens on May 1 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox theatre and May 2 at the Isabel Bader Theatre.

The discussions that brought about the peace process occurred during an era when the atmosphere in Israel and the Palestinian territories was quite polarized. Rabin had affirmed to the Israeli people that he would not negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the terrorist group led by Yasser Arafat. Violent clashes and suicide bombings were frequent.



The Oslo Diaries focuses on the close bonds that developed between the players. Due to those divisions, *The Oslo Diaries* focuses less on the political intricacies of these laborious peace talks and more on the close bonds that developed between members of the Israeli government and the PLO. Key characters include chief Palestinian negotiator Abu Ala, Israeli diplomat Uri Savir and Israeli professors and historians Ron Pundak and Yair Hirschfeld.

Loushy was at Hot Docs in 2015 with *Censored Voices*, her controversial film about the Six-Day War that Sivan produced. She explains that while their previous collaboration is one of many films to explore themes of war and trauma in Israel, there are very few about peace in the Middle East.

As violence continues to flare along the Israel-Gaza border, Loushy adds that the time is right for this documentary.

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“I think that a lot of people feel that this is such a dark time (in the Middle East), a time where there’s no hope, no optimism,” Loushy tells *The CJN*. “‘Peace’ is a word that makes you sound naive.”

As there is barely any official footage from the secret negotiations, the filmmakers relied on the titular writings from the main players. Pundak’s diary was partially published when Loushy and Sivan began working on the film. His widow gave them access to more of his reflective writings about the peace talks. (Pundak died of cancer in 2014.)

Meanwhile, many of the scenes involving the discussions had to be filmed with re-enactments featuring actors who look uncannily like the negotiators. The directors also included gems of rarely seen archival footage, which were filmed by those with close access to some of the central figures.

Loushy considers *The Oslo Diaries* to be an optimistic film, buoyed by the presence of many of the diplomats who readily accepted the opportunity to be interviewed on-camera.

“The fact that the Palestinian leadership was interviewed for this film ... about peace is a big thing,” Loushy says, adding that there are plans to air the documentary as a three-part series on Israeli television.

Another major figure the filmmakers interviewed was Shimon Peres, the former Israeli prime minister who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work on the Oslo Accords. His stirring conversation with the directors happened mere weeks before he died in September 2016.

Loushy explains that the political climate in Israel has only become more combative since Rabin’s assassination. Nevertheless, she also hopes the documentary can carve out a space to get Israelis talking about peace.

“What we’re missing today is the willingness to go toward peace,” she says. “At the end of the day, there must be a solution of peace.”

<http://www.cjnews.com/culture/entertainment/new-doc-goes-behind-the-scenes-of-the-oslo-accords>

Documentary puts revenge porn in spotlight at Tribeca Film Festival

by Sara Ashley O'Brien @saraashleyo April 27, 2018: 8:57 AM ET

Her nude photos leaked online. Now she's fighting back

A film centering on the devastating effect of online harassment against women premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival this week.

Called "Netizens," the documentary examines the day-to-day impact various forms of online abuse, ranging from online mob harassment to "revenge porn," have on people's lives.

"Revenge porn," also known as nonconsensual pornography, is the growing phenomenon of having one's intimate photos and videos spread online to shame someone or ruin their reputation.

One in eight American social media users has been a target of nonconsensual pornography, according to a 2017 study conducted by the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative. Moreover, while men and women are both victims of online harassment, women are much more likely to receive sexualized forms of online abuse, according to the Pew Research Center.

"Netizens," directed and produced by Cynthia Lowen, follows the personal stories of three women -- attorney Carrie Goldberg, game developer Anita Sarkeesian, and businesswoman Tina Reine -- who have been victims of these types of harassment. Goldberg, whose law firm represents victims of nonconsensual pornography and sexual assault, was inspired by her own experience of being victimized online by an ex-boyfriend she dated for just four months.

After launching a YouTube series about misogyny in gaming, Sarkeesian received rape and death threats by strangers online. Bomb threats were called in at her speaking events. Meanwhile, Reine's ex-boyfriend sabotaged her career in the business world by spreading information online about her past as an escort.

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Lowen, who previously wrote and produced the 2012 Emmy-nominated documentary "Bully" about the bullying crisis, said she pursued a film about gendered online violence after hearing about the lack of justice for these women. She said the advice they received included comments like, "Why don't you turn off your computer?"

"My hope is that maybe we can start to shift the perspective about this idea that 'it's just the internet' or 'it's not real,'" she said.

"Netizens" began filming in May 2015 and wrapped in December 2017. During that time, Lowen said a lot changed, including websites banning nonconsensual pornography. The vast majority of states now have some kind of revenge porn law on the books -- though the staying power of those laws is unclear. In Texas last week, an appeals court struck down a 2015 revenge porn law for being overly broad.

Still, Lowen said she is encouraged by the recent awakening around the internet and its impact on culture.

"In wake of the election, there's awareness that this isn't just hate on the internet, there are absolute real implications for online abuse. That perspective, that perception, is really shifting," she told CNNMoney.

Tech companies continue to struggle with addressing online harassment on their platforms. Companies such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have rolled out tools to help users mute trolls -- but flagging comments to the companies, and getting an appropriate response, remains an imperfect and slow process.

During a panel after the film's premiere, Sarkeesian called on tech companies to change their approach to dealing with harassment on their platforms.

"If social media companies made it five or six times harder to harass— if it took six clicks to send a hateful message -- it would drop off significantly," she said. "You can't convince someone who sees you as inhuman [that you are human]. I think that if we change the systems that we operate in, we change the way people behave within those systems."

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Lowen said she plans to take "Netizens" to college campuses, law enforcement, domestic violence advocacy organizations and social media organizations, and hopes the film can be an educational tool.

The film will have its fourth screening at Tribeca Film Festival on Friday and its international premiere at Hot Docs, a documentary festival in Toronto, on Sunday.

"We are citizens of the internet and we all have a stake in making it a place we can function," Lowen said.

CNNMoney (New York) First published April 27, 2018: 8:57 AM ET

<http://money.cnn.com/2018/04/27/technology/netizens-online-harassment-tribeca-film-festival/index.html>

Documentary explores fan campaigns to save cancelled shows

CTVNews.ca Staff
Published Friday, April 27, 2018 9:22PM EDT

An emerging documentary premiering this weekend in Toronto aims to explore the world of fan campaigns to save failing TV shows.

“United We Fan,” part of the Hot Docs Film Festival lineup, takes a deep dive into how fans mobilize to persuade networks into preserving a show, what made the campaigns successful and how social media has changed the landscape.

Director Michael Sparaga told CTV News Channel the idea for his documentary came out of his own experience of trying to persuade the entertainment industry to keep producing episodes of his favourite show.

“When I was 13 years old I wrote a letter to try and save a show that I loved called ‘Crime Story’ and that stuck with me,” he said. “I couldn’t vote for five years, but it felt like I was taking part in something very democratic.”

One of the subjects in the documentary, Dorothy Swanson, started a movement in the 1980s to keep “Cagney and Lacey,” an American television series about two female detectives who led very different lives, on the air.

The show was cancelled after two seasons, but following a public letter-writing campaign, was renewed and eventually aired for another five seasons.

“It was just a beautiful show and I thought: ‘This just has to continue,’” Swanson said.

The movement eventually led Swanson to help form Viewers for Quality Television, a now defunct organization that advocated against the cancellation of high-quality programming, regardless of ratings.

With the emergence of the internet, voicing support for a dying program has become easier. In recent years, fans of “Jericho,” “Kim Possible” and “The Killing” have all been able to mobilize and preserve their favourite shows.

With how easy it can be to sign a petition on the Internet, Sparaga says networks need to see more support if they’re going to be persuaded to keep producing a show.

“It’s evolved to the point where I think the numbers have to be different,” he said. “I don’t think 10,000 clicks is going to do it, I think (it takes) 500,000 clicks to really push things through.”

Campaigns have also evolved to the point where fans can open their wallets if they really want to see their favourite characters again. As an example, in 2013, a Kickstarter campaign for a full-length “Veronica Mars” movie raised US\$5.7 million in just a month.

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Aside from fan campaigns, the internet has also provided options for shows outside of traditional cable television, such as Netflix and YouTube. Netflix has made a habit of renewing shows that had been previously cancelled by the big networks, in hopes of attracting nostalgic fans. “Arrested Development,” “The Magic School Bus,” and “Fuller House” are all examples.

That said, when a show is renewed following a fan campaign, Sparaga worries sometimes fans can have too much influence when it comes to the storyline.

“I think it’s important that creators have that distance from fans, but it’s really about community, I think that’s what TV viewing is about,” he said.

Two Hot Docs films reveal toll online hate takes on women and overseas “content moderators”

By **BRUCE DEMARA** Entertainment Reporter
Fri., April 27, 2018

To filmmaker Cynthia Lowen, news of the recent mass killing in Toronto came with a grim confirmation that misogynistic online behaviour leads to real-world violence.

Alek Minassian, who allegedly mowed down 25 people in Toronto — killing 10 — apparently expressed anger at women in a Facebook post before his April 23 rampage, drawing praise from the dark world of online haters.

“I sit up and play close attention when (police) are investigating that the last thing this person may have done before they went out and committed these atrocious acts of violence was to express misogynistic thoughts on a social media platform,” said Lowen, whose new film *Netizens*, premiering at Hot Docs, profiles the struggles of women fighting misogynistic online hate.

In *The Cleaners*, first-time documentarians Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck explore a broader aspect of social media, the shadowy world of “content moderators” for companies like Facebook, employing workers in places like Manila who labour under a veil of secrecy and suffer enormous personal consequences.

“Most of the billions of people in the world who use social media don’t have any clue who does the cleanup work for them. We don’t know there are thousands of young workers in the developing world who sacrifice themselves in order to keep us ‘safe’ and provide us with a ‘healthy environment’ when we go online,” Riesewieck said.

“It is a very secretive and hidden industry. The companies do everything to keep the work secret. The companies use codewords to hide which companies they are working for. Facebook, for example, is called the ‘Honeybadger Project.’ The workers must keep their job

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secret. Otherwise they are sued. There are private security firms that pressure workers not to talk to strangers,” Block said.

In exploring how women were victimized online, Lowen said she found parallels from her previous film *Bully* (2011), which explored bullying in schools, both in the behaviour of the perpetrators, and the reaction of social media companies and the police.

“Site operators and law enforcement were not intervening in a meaningful way and there seemed to be this attitude of ‘It’s just the internet, it’s only online.’ It was a kind of normalizing of the kind of violence that is really ubiquitous for a lot of (women). It’s just boys being boys or that the onus was on the victims to change their lives and their routines to accommodate for the abuse,” Lowen said.

“I don’t think this is normal and I don’t necessarily think this is something we should accept as part of our online digital communities. Perhaps if I can show how this transforms every aspect of a target’s life, that attitude that this is something normal or something we should accept would begin to shift,” she added.

In *The Cleaners*, we hear poignant first-hand accounts from workers with onerous workloads — such as having to screen 25,000 images daily — who must regularly view sexual exploitation and violence, and the serious psychological scars that ensue.

“The symptoms content moderators often face ... are similar to the post-traumatic stress disorder soldiers suffer from who come back from war. Is it any wonder content moderators who see rape videos and other kinds of sexual violence for eight to 10 hours per day are not interested in sex at all anymore?” Block said.

“Is it any wonder content moderators who have seen thousands of beheadings cannot trust in other humans anymore, lose all their social relationships, develop sleeping or eating disorders? Is it any wonder there is a seriously increased suicide rate among content moderators?”

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Lowen sees glimmers of hope in combating online misogyny in the citizen activism of groups like the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative and a gradual change in attitudes among politicians.

“When I started this film, very few states had laws on non-consensual pornography or what is mislabelled ‘revenge porn.’ Now all but 12 states have some form of ‘revenge porn’ law,” Lowen said.

But Rieseewieck and Block are far less assured that genuine change is on the way.

“(Facebook CEO Mark) Zuckerberg and others claim they want to make the world more open and connected. By our investigations about social media and their policies we discovered quite the opposite: a completely intransparent, secretive industry (with) a code of silence around any kind of problems and mistakes,” Rieseewieck said.

Hot Docs review: Minding The Gap

Bing Liu's stunning feature debut explores what it means to be man coming of age in economically depressed America

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

APRIL 27, 2018

6:25 PM



MINDING THE GAP (Bing Liu, U.S.). 93 minutes. Rating: NNNNN

Bing Liu's feature debut is expansive in scope and personal in execution. Born out of a love of skateboarding videos, the film tells the story of Liu and two teenage friends – Keire Johnson and Zack Mulligan – who are grappling with what it means to be men in economically depressed Rockford, Illinois.

Each is obsessed with skateboarding, which provides an escape from less-than-stellar situations at home. Liu opens the doc with a montage of skate footage and boys having fun. The sweetness of these scenes and the friends' candour and emotional openness is amplified by beautiful and probing camerawork. The director instantly draws you in, but soon it becomes clear that skateboarding is an outlet for a lot of anger. As they enter their 20s, Mulligan becomes a young father but resists growing up; Johnson struggles to gain financial stability. Fraught relationships with fathers cast a long shadow over both.

Minding The Gap isn't exactly a memoir, but Liu establishes himself as a character, so the audience is constantly reminded that the characters are aware of the camera. As the story takes darker twists and turns, and Liu turns the lens on his own family, the stakes are not just about

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who will do the right thing, but how the young director will handle upsetting situations and complex emotions that bubble to the surface. In one gut-wrenching scene, he confronts his mother on camera about his abusive stepfather. Skateboarding is a form of catharsis – and so is filmmaking.

In the doc's stunning third act, the various story strands crescendo in an almost montage-like sequence that mirrors earlier skateboarding montages. The effect packs and emotional wallop.

May 2, 8:15 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 3, 3:30 pm, TIFF 2; May 6, 6:15 pm, TIFF 2

Hot Docs review: Crime + Punishment

Director Stephen Maing gets an insider's view of the NYPD's discriminatory arrest practices

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

APRIL 27, 2018

6:16 PM



CRIME + PUNISHMENT (Stephen Maing, U.S.). 111 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Police quotas are a big topic in the news, but Stephen Maing's documentary gets an insider's view of the discriminatory practice.

Crime + Punishment follows the NYPD 12 – a group of minority New York cops who sued the department over discriminatory practices – as they endure internal retaliation for speaking out against an issue that led to the death of Eric Garner in 2014.

Maing has spent years covering cops, capturing plenty of damning evidence of the NYPD's arbitrary arrests – the charges are usually dismissed, though lives can still be ruined – and subsequent attempts to intimidate and deny whistleblowers, sometimes via hidden microphones officers wore to meetings with their superiors.

But the film is more than a social issue doc: at its core, Crime + Punishment is a portrait of moral people who exist in limbo. Some officers had difficult lives and got into policing thinking they would make a difference in their communities. But they quickly realize the law does not matter and will not protect them. And because they are cops, the activist community is wary of partnering with them. Maing amplifies this sense of isolation with beautiful zoom-in aerial shots the New York City skyline.

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The doc also follows a crusading and charismatic private investigator, Manuel Gomez (he clearly loves the camera's attention), as he gathers evidence to free a wrongly arrested teen from Rikers Island, showing the issue from the victim's point of view. Maing packs in plenty of dramatic stakes, giving the doc the feel of a legal thriller.

May 3, 6 pm, TIFF 1; May 4, 12:45 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; May 5, 8:45 pm, TIFF 1

Hot Docs review: Love, Scott

Powerful and intimate doc probes the prolonged aftermath of a brutal hate crime

BY **KEVIN RITCHIE**

APRIL 27, 2018

6:06 PM



LOVE, SCOTT (Laura Marie Wayne, Canada). 76 minutes. Rating: NNN

In 2013, Scott Jones was attacked outside a Halifax bar and paralyzed from the waist down. The perpetrator was convicted, but Jones told police a judgmental look earlier in the night convinced him the crime was motivated by a hatred of gay people. Although Jones has since moved to Toronto to focus on choral music and has channelled his grief and trauma into a successful anti-homophobia campaign, the fact that police did not consider it a hate crime continues to cause a lot of frustration and angst.

Director Laura Marie Wayne (a longtime friend of Jones) foregrounds the hate crime issue in a digressive, dreamy documentary that unfolds largely through a series of intimate conversations in different settings: in nature, in a car parked at the scene of the crime, in Toronto as Jones prepares for a public speaking event.

Love, Scott feels especially potent since the Bruce McArthur case has highlighted how many queer people are afraid to report crimes – motivated by hate or otherwise. The meandering nature of the film powerfully captures the liminality of Jones's life, but is also frustrating. Wayne's presence is more stylistic and spectral than tangible and the film strangely de-emphasizes her role in a therapeutic process the film is clearly instigating.

April 28, 6:30 pm, TIFF 1; April 29, 10:15 am, Isabel Bader; May 3, 9:15 pm, TIFF 2

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-review-love-scott/>

Hot Docs review: United Skates

Film about American rollerskating subculture could be a future cult classic

BY **KEVIN RITCHIE**

APRIL 27, 2018

5:02 PM



UNITED SKATES (Dyana Winkler, Tina Brown, U.S.). 86 minutes. Rating: NNNN

It's tempting to call Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown's *United Skates* a future cult classic, but their doc about African-American roller skating subculture deserves mainstream attention.

United Skates begins with a history of roller rinks' influence on hip-hop culture, showing how artists like Salt-N-Pepa, Dr. Dre, Busta Rhymes and Queen Latifah came up playing rinks at a time when their music was excluded from traditional live venues of comparable size. Several artists and talking heads provide context before the directors shift into vérité mode to follow a handful of skaters and rink operators struggling to keep the culture – and these safe spaces for families – alive in the face of racism and gentrification.

This is where the film really comes to life. We meet Phelicia Wright, a diehard skater and mother of five faced with the closure of Los Angeles's last remaining rink, *World On Wheels*, in 2013. In one memorable sequence, the family drives out of town to a white-owned rink and, through hidden camera footage, we see a staffer tell them they can't skate there because the wheels on their skates are too small. Ostensibly the rule is for safety, but really it's one of many coded ways operators try to keep Black patrons out (another patron has small wheels, which the family points out to no avail).

Some of the best sequences go deep into regional differences in moves and music. A major focus of the film is Chicago, where skaters dance to DJs spinning James Brown edits. The

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skating montages are insanely fun, but the doc could go deeper into the particulars of the music (licensing was perhaps an issue), moves and fashions in different cities.

United Skates is essentially the Paris Is Burning of roller skating, mixing joyous skating footage with years-long character arcs that show the ways social and economic forces both fuel and hinder subculture. It captures the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. Roller rinks may seem like a retro-leisure concept, but this ambitious film successfully positions the disappearing venues at a social and political crossroads that feels urgent.

April 28, 9 pm, Scotiabank 3; April 30, 1 pm, TIFF 2; May 4, 9:30 pm, TIFF 1

Hot Docs review: Take Light

Powerful first feature shines light on the electrical grid in Nigeria, where over half of the population lives without a consistent supply of electricity

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 27, 2018

2:10 PM



TAKE LIGHT (Shasha Nakhai, Canada). 78 minutes. Rating: NNNN

In her first feature documentary, **Shasha Nakhai** (a producer on recent docs **Driving With Selvi** and **Frame 394**) looks at the state of the electrical grid in Nigeria, where over half of the population lives without a consistent supply of electricity.

Take Light approaches its subject at ground level, introducing us to people and institutions “connected by the grid” – or by the lack of it. Our guide is a chatty electrician named **Martins**, who spends his days trying to get the unstable, unreliable infrastructure working for more and more people.

It’s an uphill battle: homes and businesses get a few hours of power at best, and black-market electricians add further strain by making illegal connections. The effects of deprivation ripple insidiously outward: a hospital ER regularly treats patients who’ve burned themselves working on gasoline generators; a morgue can’t keep its refrigerators functioning consistently, which leads to bodies decomposing too quickly.

There’s a lot to take in, and Nakhai and editor **Rich Williamson** (who directed **Frame 394**) let it all flow elegantly, tying data to human stories rather than cold statistics – and, somehow, ending the film on a hopeful note.

April 27, 6:45 pm, Hart House; May 1, 3:15 pm, Scotiabank 3; May 3, 6:30 pm, Scotiabank 3

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-take-light-nigeria-electrical-grid/>

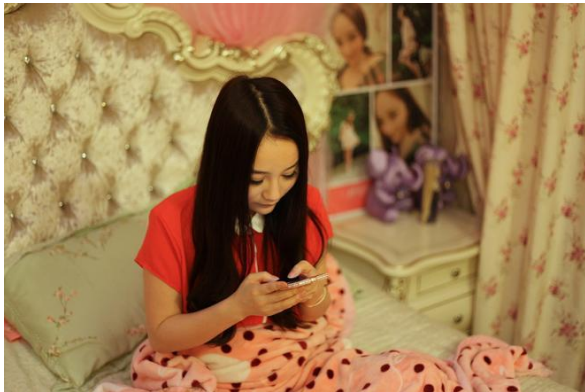
Hot Docs review: People's Republic Of Desire

Documentary illustrates the benefits and costs of online fame in China

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 26, 2018

11:36 PM



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF DESIRE (Hao Wu, U.S.). 94 minutes. Rating: NNNN

Ordinary people becoming famous online is nothing new, but in China it's become both an art form and a lucrative business model. A live-streaming site called YY allows young people called "diaosi" (a slang term for socially isolated losers, which they may or may not be trying to reclaim) to log on, perform on their webcams and solicit cash "gifts" from online patrons. An annual competition determines the network's biggest star.

Director **Hao Wu** follows two of the top contenders, singer **Shen Man** and comic **Big Li**, over two years, during which their fortunes rise and fall on the whims of their followers. For putting herself into the public sphere, 21-year-old Shen endures constant misogynistic abuse – including a prostitution scandal – while Li enjoys a much easier ride.

The doc occasionally feels like it's overplaying its cutting-edge subject matter, with Wu employing busy CG animation to represent YY's virtual arena. That's a distraction from its real focus: the desire to be seen, and how that desire can be monetized (and even weaponized) by companies out to make a buck at any cost.

April 28, 9 pm, Hart House; April 30, 3 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 5, 6:15 pm, Revue

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-peoples-republic-of-desire/>

The Reel Roundup – April 27, 2018

Hot Docs Review: 'United We Fan' Showcases the Joy of the Common Goal

APRIL 27, 2018 RATTAN MUTTI



They say when you love something set it free, and if it loves you it will come back. These are people that took that notion into their own hands and hoped that their voices would be heard by the highest powers. These are people that wanted what they love to be known and heard. These are fans.

Fan culture has risen to an all-time high. Thanks to social media, fans are constantly interacting with each other about their favorite shows, now more than ever. But ***United We Fan*** explores how this has been going on since as long ago as the original *Star Trek*. The documentary does a great job of showcasing the joy and happiness these shows bring to them, and excellently explores how the fans have actually had an impact on the executives in Hollywood. At the same time, it demonstrates that these shows and their characters are something that these people live with, and that will stay with them for a long time to come.

The passion that drives these people is what makes it beautiful. The impact it has on them makes it profound and worth the while. At its core, ***United We Fan*** is really just about how a group of people with a common goal can make a really big impact.

***United We Fan* screens Saturday, April 28th, Monday, April 30th and Thursday, May 3rd at Hot Docs. Its runtime is 1 hr. 37 min.**

<http://www.thereelroundup.com/2018/04/united-we-fan-hot-docs-review.html>

Review: 'Witkin & Witkin'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 27th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Witkin & Witkin

(Mexico, 93 min.)

Dir. Trisha Ziff

Program: Made in Mexico (International Premiere)

Being a twin can sometimes feel like being in a circus sideshow. People gawk. They stare. They ask questions nobody would ever ask a “single.”

As a twin, I can relate to the stories presented in *Witkin & Witkin* about twin artists Jerome, a painter, and Joel-Peter, a photographer. For example, my twin brother and I both work in film. He’s a publicist and I’m a writer. It works well, except when his movies stink (though that never happens!), but someone always makes a joke when I review one of his company’s films favourably, or imposter syndrome sets in if I score an interview with a talent far above my pay grade.

This rolling sense of inadequacy has roots in the ways people discuss and view twinhood: it’s a novelty or oddity. Just take one example where, back when I worked at Second Cup during high school, a complete stranger asked to see my teeth because my twin, who worked down the street at Zellers, had just been her cashier. (How messed up is that?) Being a twin can rewire your brain in ways that singles never consider. At restaurants, I refuse to order the same food as my twin and have a back-up plan with the menu just to avoid giving the server an entry for an awkward joke. My twin knows this quirk and always makes sure to order first. (Although we agree that twin orders of duck are the permissible exception.) Being a twin is means being in competition with your best friend. It’s great, but it’s also weird because people in general lack filters and can be insensitive jerks.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – April 27, 2018 (2 of 2)

Witkin & Witkin runs with the element of twinning that is downright carnivalesque. The circus atmosphere feels appropriate given the nature of the work that makes the Witkin brothers famous. Jerome's paintings are dark and mysterious and Joel's photographs dabble in the macabre while exploring the imperfections of the body. Their art reflects the experiences of people who have constantly been objects of uncomfortable gazes and comparisons. They find splendour in divergences from traditional forms of beauty, particularly Joel, who spent much of his childhood in Jerome's shadow, the latter having established himself as an artist and prodigy quite young. A twin is always aware of his or her imperfections, but feeling like the carbon copy of the pair arguably pushed Joel to challenge himself more profoundly as an artist.

As the film brings the brothers together for a joint art show in Mexico City, their stories bridge the gap left by years of estrangement. Both sides agree that Jerome's early success as an artist cut the first wedge between them, but their respective triumphs have done much to mute any sibling rivalry.

The film intimately links their identities as twins to their evolution as artists, but it doesn't define them by their shared genes. Backstories explain their personal growth, such as Joel's difficult tales of being a war photographer or Jerome's reasons for creating a devastating portrait of his wife, Lisa, which conveys their grief over the loss of their son. The study of the brothers' evolution offers a fascinating entry into the nature/nurture debate, for there are commonalities to the ways in which the Witkins express diverse experiences and differences.

Director Trisha Ziff thankfully has a lot more tact than the lady at Second Cup did and treats the brothers as equals. More importantly, she treats them as individuals, as humans. The doc encourages audiences to look at the brothers Witkin with observant interest and curiosity. Here's a case where it's fine to stare at twins.

Ziff doesn't try anything cute, though. She contrasts their stories by highlighting similarities and differences that reveal commonalities and divergences between the brothers as men and artists. As a portrait of artists, *Witkin & Witkin* is an enlightening character study, but as a snapshot of the strange experience of being a twin, it's remarkably true to life.

Witkin & Witkin screens:

-Tues, May 1 at 6:15 PM at Scotiabank

-Thurs, May 3 at Isabel Bader

-Sat, May 5 at 10:30 AM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-witkin-witkin>

Review: 'Netizens'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 27th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Netizens

(USA, 97 min.)

Dir. Cynthia Lowen

Programme: Silence Breakers (International Premiere)

Hot Docs spotlights the Silence Breakers this year with a special line-up of films that capture the passion, energy, rage, and impact of the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements in the wake of Harvey Weinstein's precipitous fall that rocked Hollywood and workplace relations worldwide. Of all these all-female directed films in the line-up, Cynthia Lowen's *Netizens* represents female voices in the festival's splashy Scotiabank Big Ideas series in which filmmakers and subjects engage in conversations following the film. There couldn't be a better film than *Netizens* with which to motivate this conversation about women's rights and the fight against misogyny. The film features several courageous women who fight for change against the most pervasive predator of all: the Internet.

There are no Harvey Weinstens in *Netizens*. No Bill Cosbys, James Tobacks, Matt Lauers, or Jian Ghomeshis. The men who target women in *Netizens* are the faceless cowards who hide behind the Internet and prey from afar. It is both terrifying and repulsive to see the lengths to which men go with the aid of anonymity.

However, Lowen gives facetime to three brave women and their stories demand attention. Carrie Goldberg, for example, is a New York attorney who specializes in victims' rights. *Netizens* opens with an unsettling sequence in which Goldberg walks Lowen through a crime scene. She takes the camera up a rugged concrete hill over which her client was carried and dragged before being brutally raped. She then tells Lowen that this young girl relives the assault daily because her classmate posted a video of the attack online, which made the rounds for all the school to see. The administration's response? Simply to seize any phones from students who had seen the video, delete the files, and return the phones. The action, or lack thereof, illustrates the institutional bias that puts attackers first and survivors second.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – April 27, 2018 (2 of 2)

Other alarming aspects of cyberbullying and virtual predation arise in the story of vlogger Anita Sarkeesian. The feminist critic and proud geek opens up about her experience rocking the video game world with her scathingly funny deconstructions of gender roles and sexism. *Netizens* shows how her videos like “Tropes vs. Women” brought the Twitter trolls out of hiding. The mere act of speaking up against misogyny emboldens some men to return it with fury. Sarkeesian tells of death threats, rape jokes, and cringe-worthy harassment by men who feel threatened by a woman’s voice. This misogyny only fuels her work and strengthens its urgency.

Perhaps the most compelling and eye-opening tale of *Netizens* is that of Tina Reine. She introduces her story by reading an eager offer of employment for a high-level position at JP Morgan Chase. Reine recalls how that offer disappeared and how all communication with JP Morgan Chase ceased when someone at the firm Googled her name and saw countless blogs and posts exposing her history as an escort. It turns out that the author of these posts was Reine’s ex-boyfriend who reframed and tried to redefine her life via revenge porn. Lowen follows Reine as she strives to erase this story from the Internet. That isn’t easy, however, when amendments of free speech protect the person posting anonymous poison on Tumblr more often than they serve the target. Like Goldberg and Sarkeesian, however, Reine refuses to let the perversions of the Internet define her.

This provocative film sees these three stories through fruition as each subject defies misogyny and mansplainers to create a safer space for women. Lowen intercuts the three main stories with other voices who add their experiences with online misogyny and their efforts to join the fight. The sad reality implied within this chorus of silence breakers, however, is that these stories are all too common. Harvey Weinstein might be the most salacious headline but the predation enabled by the Internet is too gross for any one film to contain.

What Lowen achieves, however, is a demand to fix the conversation, laws, language, and, ultimately, system. This empowering film shows the grit and tenacity of three women who courageously fight for change. It’s time for lawmakers and leaders to fight with them. A retweet with a hashtag is not enough.

Netizens screens:

- Sun, Apr. 29 at 6:30 PM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema (Scotiabank Big Ideas screening)
- Mon, Apr. 30 at 10:00 AM at the Isabel Bader
- Sat, May 5 at 10:00 AM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-netizens>

Review: 'The Distant Barking of Dogs'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Daniel Glassman](#) • Published April 27th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



The Distant Barking of Dogs

(Denmark/Finland/Sweden, 86 min.)

Dir. Simon Lereng Wilmont

"Every dog is a lion in its own house."

It is almost a cliché at this point for documentaries about war to focus on the neutral, innocent civilians who could not care less about the conflict and just want to get on with their lives. At first, *The Distant Barking of Dogs* seems to be one of these—it is; and that is a fine thing for it to be—but it is also, by the end, something more, something darker.

The film is about two little boys—cousins Oleg and Yarik—and their grandmother living in eastern Ukraine during the ongoing conflict there. The kids do what kids do: roughhouse, swim in the stream, smash bottles with an older boy, Kostya. It would all seem totally normal except for the bombs constantly exploding in the distance. Mixed in with the kids' vocabulary of play and exploration are words like mortar, howitzer, bomb shelter.

As the film progresses, things hit increasingly close to home. Yarik and his mother leave for the safer western part of Ukraine, and when they return, it turns out the kids there beat him up for speaking Russian. Kostya brings the boys to an abandoned barracks and tells them he once tried to sell fish there, only to have a drunk soldier aim his machine gun at him and tell him to go away. The kids' antics also become increasingly affected by the war going on: it starts quietly with Oleg in all innocence espousing a philosophy of stoic masculinity and culminates with the three of them playing dangerously with a gun. Oleg and Yarik's grandmother's health also takes a hit from the stress of the war.

POINT OF VIEW Magazine – April 27, 2018 (2 of 2)

It's that stuff, which sets *The Distant Barking of Dogs* apart. It's not just about the trauma of war, or the paralysis imposed on civilians, but the ways in which war reproduces itself through the constant spectre of violence, through the houses and homes it breaks, through the social ruptures it produces. There is a world of difference between the kids' innocent play-fighting and the real violence near the end of the film, but with the war confusing those distinctions, it falls to the kids' grandmother to try to restore and maintain normalcy with them against long odds.

Director Simon Lereng Wilmont's approach, which resembles classic Terence Malick in its mix of observation with occasional poetic voiceover, always keeps the violence at a distance while focusing on Oleg and his family and the starkly beautiful landscape. It's an approach that is perfectly suited to the Ukraine conflict, which always seems to be at a simmer, affecting the population as much through displacement, the erosion of institutions and infrastructure and the faultlines it reveals within the Ukrainian populace as through direct violence.

The Distant Barking of Dogs screens:

-Tues, May 1 at 3:15 PM at Hart House

-Thurs, May 3 at 9:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Netflix, Hot Docs team for funding, development initiative

By Barry Walsh

April 27, 2018



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As Hot Docs launches its industry programming today (April 30), the Toronto-based documentary festival and conference is also unveiling a five-year funding and development initiative for Canadian filmmakers, with global streamer Netflix as its partner.

The Hot Docs Canadian Storytellers Project will invest in core funding and professional development programs for Canadian doc-makers who are Indigenous, Francophone, Deaf and/or have a disability, or who are persons of color. It's funded out of the CDN\$25 million market development fund announced last September in conjunction with Netflix's pledge to spend \$500 million over five years on Canadian productions.

The centerpiece of the initiative is the CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund, which will financially support 25-40 independent documentary projects from emerging filmmakers over the next five years with grants ranging from CDN\$10,000-\$50,000. Both short and feature-length projects will be supported with development, production or post-production funding.

The CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund will accept applications for its first round of disbursements in the fall of 2018.

Realscreen – April 27, 2018 (2 of 3)

The Canadian Storytellers Project will also intersect with existing Hot Docs programs to provide further year-round opportunities for Canadian filmmakers. It will support 10 fellowships annually for Hot Docs' Doc Accelerator program for emerging filmmakers. Fellows in the Doc Accelerator program take part in a bespoke two-day private lab during the Hot Docs Festival, where they learn from industry experts, attend hands-on workshops and gain access to the Festival's full slate of industry programming.

At this year's edition of Hot Docs, 10 emerging filmmakers from the identified priority groups are currently enrolled in the Doc Accelerator program via support from Netflix. Applications for next year's Doc Accelerator program will be accepted in winter 2019.

The project will also have a connection with Hot Docs' Doc Ignite labs, which offer established and emerging doc-makers professional development curriculums regarding such topics as audience engagement, marketing and distribution. Through the new Hot Docs/Netflix initiative, no-cost Doc Ignite labs will touch down in multiple communities across Canada across the span of the project. Those will begin in the summer of 2018.

The project was designed through extensive and ongoing consultations with a diverse group of arts and culture organizations and individual artists across Canada. Hot Docs will engage the support of a Storytellers Advisory made up of film and media professionals from the groups served by the project to provide ongoing guidance. Members of these groups will also be involved in decision-making processes.

"Supporting Canadian storytellers is more important now than ever, and Netflix's extraordinary commitment will be a game changer for many unheralded documentary filmmakers," said Brett Hendrie (pictured, left), Hot Docs' executive director, in a statement. "This program will champion world-class talent and reflect the incredible depth and breadth of communities across Canada. We thank Netflix for their collaboration and partnership, and we look forward to bringing these opportunities to filmmakers."

Realscreen – April 27, 2018 (3 of 3)

“Netflix and its members around the world are passionate about documentary films and series,” said Lisa Nishimura (pictured, right), Netflix’s vice president of original documentaries and comedy. “We are thrilled to partner with Hot Docs to support Canadian storytellers. This project will promote opportunities for emerging filmmakers, who offer a diversity of perspectives and connect their unique voices to global audiences.”

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival runs April 26 to May 6.

New documentary explores the best Broadway musicals you never saw

By **JOHN CARUCCI**

The Associated Press. Fri., April 27, 2018

NEW YORK—If you've never heard of lavish musicals such as *The Bathrooms Are Coming* or *Diesel Dazzle* you're not alone. Yet, these elaborate productions have borrowed the talents of some of Broadway's biggest names.

Tony-winning director Susan Stroman admits she “cut her teeth” on what was known as the industrial musical: extravagant productions the general public never got to see. Instead, they were meant for corporations to show to clients, dealers and investors.



Steve Young in the documentary *Bathtubs Over Broadway*, which is scheduled to appear in some upcoming film festivals, including Toronto's Hot Docs Festival on May 1, 3 and 5. (COURTESY OF HOT DOCS)

Steve Young in the documentary *Bathtubs Over Broadway*, which is scheduled to appear in some upcoming film festivals, including Toronto's Hot Docs Festival on May 1, 3 and 5. (COURTESY OF HOT DOCS)

Now, a new documentary called *Bathtubs Over Broadway* allows audiences into this secret world. Stroman, along with the film's writer, director and some of its actors, peeled back the curtain recently at the film's world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

“A lot of corporations would hire us to sing and dance about the product. And, in fact, that's how I really got started choreographing and directing,” Stroman said.

Broadway legends Bob Fosse, Chita Rivera and Sheldon Harnick also lent their talents before making it big. And songwriting duo John Kander and Fred Ebb wrote a musical for General Electric called *Go Fly a Kite* before tackling shows like *Chicago* and *Cabaret*.

The film does not have a release date, though it's scheduled to appear in some upcoming film festivals, including Toronto's Hot Docs Festival on May 1, 3 and 5.

Toronto Star – April 27, 2018 (2 of 2)

It was the brainchild of former *Late Show With David Letterman* writer Steve Young, who began collecting souvenir recordings after learning about these special productions. It is directed by Dava Whisenant.

"It follows Steve on a journey where he meets all the people that made these corporate musicals that no one had ever heard of. It was a secret world," Whisenant said.

Young said he was happy to "drag these shows from the abyss" to let people know about these amazing productions.

"It's going to be a taste of a hidden art form that was a huge part of American entertainment and culture that the public was completely unaware of because it was private, behind closed doors for company meetings," Young said.

Stroman, the five-time Tony winning director and choreographer of such shows as *The Producers*, *Crazy for You* and *Show Boat*, feels these shows were "a stepping stone for where I needed to be."

"They could be very silly. But in fact they were the way we made a living waiting for our Broadway show or waiting for our off-Broadway show," she said. "The industrial shows kept us alive."

Back in the day, Coca Cola, Detroit Diesel, Ford, Xerox and others financed these productions. But unless you were at a sales meeting for American Standard dealers in 1969, you would not have seen *The Bathrooms Are Coming*.

Stroman laughed at some of the silly ideas.

"I did a show for Miller beer, where I had big girls dressed in beer bottles dancing around the set. Or, you know, we did some for Honeywell Computers where we did a takeoff on *How to Succeed in Business*," she said.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2018/04/27/new-documentary-explores-the-best-broadway-musicals-you-never-saw.html>

That time Bill Murray crashed the party: A new film chronicles the actor's random real-life cameos

The Bill Murray Stories explores chance meetings with the actor-comedian

CBC Radio · April 27



Bill Murray is the subject of a new documentary that explores his surprise encounters with everyday people. (Axel Schmidt/Reuters)

Listen 8:14

Bill Murray's has got plenty of attention for his cameos in films like *Zombieland*, *Space Jam* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. But lately, his seemingly-random offscreen appearances are also creating buzz.

Over the years, stories have surfaced about him showing up at birthday parties, stealing french fries at a Massachusetts airport and riding a kid's bicycle through a Walmart in Michigan. And that's just the beginning.

These bizarre encounters with the actor have become the stuff of legend online, and they're now the focus of *The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From A Mythical Man*, a documentary making its international premiere at Hot Docs on April 30 in Toronto.

"I just think Bill (Murray) lives his life in a particular way that once you see it and you're a part of it, you know that's an interesting way to live," film director Tommy Avallone said in an interview with *Day 6*.

"There's so many times you're just stuck in a routine and he likes to do these sort of things that shock you out of that."

CBC Radio (Day 6) – April 28, 2018 (2 of 4)



During a baseball game, Bill Murray invited Karen Michel, a random fan, to watch the match with him. (@MLB/Twitter)

Bill Murray 'just fits in' with the crowd

Hearing stories of Murray's random appearances fascinated Avallone because of their contrast to the actor's enigmatic personality.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Murray has no manager or agent. And for those who want to reach him, they can leave him a message at a 1-800 number, and he'll reply if he's interested.

Avallone's documentary looks into why someone as private as Murray would do such quirky things. He interviewed dozens of people to see whether their encounters with Murray were true.

He's not like, 'Hey, look at me, I'm Bill Murray — the star.' He's eating lasagna in the kitchen, just blending in. - *Tommy Avallone*, film director

One of his favourite stories was when Murray apparently showed up at a college party in Scotland and started washing the dishes.

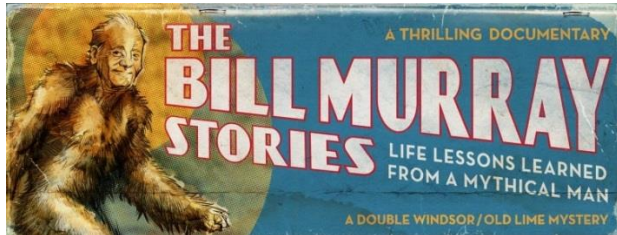
"Who goes to someone else's party and cleans the dishes? No one wants to clean up, but Murray is actively pursuing the dishwashing," he said.

Avallone also recalls the time Murray showed up to a house party in Austin, Texas, playing roadie to a band for their gig. The actor ended up playing the tambourine for them as well. And when the cops were called in by the neighbours, they were convinced to join in on the festivities.

"He just fits in," Avallone said.

CBC Radio (Day 6) – April 28, 2018 (3 of 4)

"He's not like, 'Hey, look at me, I'm Bill Murray — the star.' He's eating lasagna in the kitchen, just blending in."



'The Bill Murray Stories: Life lessons Learned From a Mythical Man' will make its premiere at Hot Docs in Toronto. (Double Windsor Films)

Director waiting for his Murray moment

Avallone says these encounters allow everyday people to connect with Murray on a personal level.

"I think he uses what could be entrapping to some people as a free pass on to just fun times and experiences."

His recognizable face "allows him to get away with certain things like stealing someone's french fry. What does it feel like to steal someone's french fry and get away with it?"

Avallone jokes that he's hoping Murray will make his next surprise appearance at the film's screening in Toronto.

"If this was a scripted movie, I'll be at Hot Docs with our international premiere and he'll be in the audience and only I could see him," Avallone said.

"He'll give a nice little golf clap, give me a thumbs up and just walk away and disappear. No one else will see it."

"That's my Hollywood-envisioned story that will never happen."

CBC Radio (Day 6) – April 28, 2018 (4 of 4)

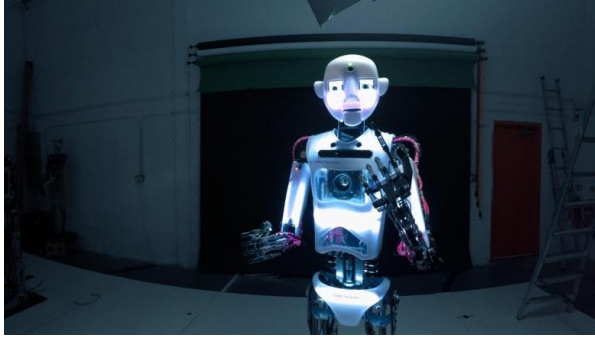


Bill Murray poses with documentarian and director Tommy Avallone. (Double Windsor Films)

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/day6/that-time-bill-murray-crashed-the-party-a-new-film-chronicles-the-actor-s-random-real-life-cameos-1.4634834>

Documentary 'More Human than Human' explores AI, by making AI

CBC Radio · April 27



More Human Than Human is playing at Toronto's Hot Docs festival. (Submarine)

Listen 9:22

Have you ever thought about what it really means to be human in the age of intelligent machines?

More Human Than Human is a documentary that looks at the rise of artificial intelligence, partly from a technical point of view, but also from a cultural point of view.

As well as exploring the current state of AI, the filmmakers also wanted to immerse themselves in it. They took part in the building of a robotic AI to see if it could conduct the film's final interview.

More Human Than Human is running at Toronto's Hot Docs film festival. It was written and directed by Tommy Pallotta and Femke Wolting. Femke Wolting spoke to Nora about their film.

Here is part of their conversation:

So why did you decide to make this film?

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Femke Wolting, director of *More Human Than Human*. (Submarine)

We have always been interested in the crossover between technology and film, and of course there's so much debate now about AI; the last few years about how it's impacting the job market and basically more and more parts of our lives, in healthcare and education, in the economy and the financial markets. It's becoming part of almost every part of our lives without actually us really realizing.

And so we thought it was an important moment to make a film about AI and investigate from a human perspective what kind of changes AI brings to our lives.

So are you worried about being replaced by an AI?

Yes and no - because on the one hand it doesn't live up to its promises right now. I feel that we are still in a clunky stage, but we also realized how fast computer technology is changing.

The film explored many different examples of AI. Which one amazed you or maybe frightened you the most?

A couple, on the one hand we felt like the examples with the people we filmed who are actually working with real robots. I mean the factories that we were filming that are robot-driven are kind of extraordinary, cinematic, and fascinating, but it's all still kind of repetitive simple tasks.

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The AI that we felt was most frightening was actually the AI that's already being used today. It's much more invisible, it's in the internet, it's in the way data is used, and how so much about us is already known and used without us giving explicit permission, without any regulation.

Of course we're nowhere near being able to create the AI of popular culture: you know, the kind with true general intelligence that understands or has consciousness. What do you make of our desire to see human qualities in these machines?

I think it's part of human nature to want to build and develop new things and to take technology as far as it can get. And I think it also shows our need for human connection, so that we want to find these connections also in computers and in AI and that they can be meaningful.

For example, we filmed with these robot designers who had built these childlike robots and they placed them with elderly people in the Netherlands. And it was a big moral debate if they should be allowed to do that, if it was not frightening to have these robots. And within a couple of days these elderly people felt happier and they felt it had improved their lives.

And of course it's easy to say yes, human connection is better, and I think it probably would be better. But at the same time our society currently doesn't really provide that to a lot of people. And so to those people if these connections feel meaningful and it improves their lives. I think it's also a mistake to be really judgmental about it and say that it's not real.

Ex-IRA woman describes abduction, murder and secret burial of Jean McConville



Ex-IRA woman Dolours Price. Photo: Pacemaker Belfast

Suzanne Breen

April 28 2018 2:30 AM

Former IRA woman Dolours Price has described the abduction, murder and secret burial of Jean McConville in unprecedented detail in a new documentary.

'I, Dolours', which premieres this weekend at the Hot Docs festival in Toronto, features a video-recorded interview that journalist Ed Moloney conducted with her. It includes new revelations about the 1972 murder of the Belfast mother-of-10.

In previous interviews, Price confessed her role in driving Ms McConville across the Border and handing her over to a Dundalk IRA unit.

Price also repeats claims that the mother-of-10 was an informer and details an alleged incident in a west Belfast barracks where she identified IRA members to the security forces.

Ms McConville's children last night dismissed Price's claims their mother was an informer but said they did accept parts of Price's testimony which were supported by other independent accounts. Price has previously alleged Gerry Adams ordered Ms McConville's murder, a claim ex-Sinn Féin president has strongly denied.

Price was found dead at her home in Malahide, Co Dublin, in 2013 from a toxic prescription drugs mix. The 61-year-old was the former wife of actor Stephen Rea.

Price claims under IRA interrogation, Ms McConville confessed to becoming an informer "for money". She says when she picked up Ms McConville, she wasn't frightened for her life because she had been told by the IRA she wouldn't be killed.

Price says the Dundalk IRA men had "a grave dug" but "couldn't bring themselves to execute" Ms McConville "probably because she was a woman".

So Price, Pat McClure, who died in the US in 1986, and a third member of the Unknowns took Ms McConville to the grave where she was "shot in the back of the head by one of the

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volunteers". There was one pistol but Price indicated the trio all fired it separately so they took shared responsibility for the execution.

She admitted being haunted by her role in the deaths.

<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/exira-woman-describes-abduction-murder-and-secret-burial-of-jean-mcconville-36853333.html>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Katrina Costello — “The Silver Branch”

BY Sophie Willard April 28, 2018

Katrina Costello co-founded Sea Fever Productions in 2006 along with her husband, Kevin O’Sullivan. The company is dedicated to producing natural history documentary films in Ireland. “The Silver Branch” is her debut film. In addition to directing, Costello shot and edited the feature.

“The Silver Branch” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 1.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

KC: On the face on it, this is a drama documentary about Patrick McCormack, an Irish farmer and poet who farms in Ireland’s most ancient and rugged landscape, the Burren in Western Ireland. As a boy, Patrick left school at 14 years of age and made a promise to himself: to be truly free in the world, to serve the fields, and to honor the story of the ancestor. He lives his life in pace with simple traditional farming—in winter, he tends his cattle in the hail and wind, and in spring he sows his garden of potatoes and vegetables.

Patrick crosses over the fields to help elderly friends and neighbors; they exchange old yarns and anecdotes about the weather. Their laughter is infectious, and an antidote to the problems of our contemporary world. Patrick has always looked in awe of these old bachelor farmers, and their generation; for their complete knowledge of themselves, and the wonderful connection they have with their cows, and their fields. We are privy to this private world, and to the majesty of nature that surrounds them.

Patrick longs to farm in the quiet pace his ancestors did but his life gains a different momentum when he’s called to battle in the Supreme courts to decide on the fate of this iconic wilderness. Patrick’s battle to take on the government to prevent the area from becoming a tourist mecca, and to preserve the wilderness is a universal story.

While Patrick tells us of the difficulties and personal stresses of this period—from financial strain to loss of friendships—we are constantly drawn back to the bigger picture. He wants us to understand why this case was so important as to warrant the sacrifices that came with it.

The film reminds us that there is something greater at risk of being lost—it’s a passionate but subtle plea to be gentle with the earth, and her resources.

“The Silver Branch” has not got the characteristics of a typical conservation doc, but rather it is an ode to nature, and it does stir in us a love for wilderness, and a desire to reconnect and protect our rural agrarian culture and our wildlife.

It is a bittersweet end-of-era evocation, and a story of hope.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

KC: The desire to make this film has grown out of my feelings for the wilderness—the moments of magic on the hills, and my memories of farming with my father in Ireland in the ’60s and ’70s. My childhood days were free and easy, roaming across the fields, tending stock, with a welcome and a yarn in every home in the village. But like 90 percent of people my age at that

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time, I left Ireland in the '80s. I wanted to explore and travel. I worked in some of the major stock exchanges, and banking capitals of the world, installing trading room computer software.

This is a long way from filmmaking but contracting allowed me the opportunity to do what I love: to go alone, photographing, and living in far-off reaches, from the mountains of Asia, to the basin of the Amazon. I was especially drawn to rural communities, to the people who live close to the soil or the water. I was—and am—always compelled by the elders, for their stories, their honesty, acceptance, and knowledge of themselves.

Returning to Ireland with my husband in 2000 to start our family, we spent a lot of time rediscovering our countryside and mountains.

There is no limit to your imagination when you sit on a mountain, and I longed to show the world these moments of magic. The wildlife alone is spectacular, but the miles and miles of stone walls, the small fields, and forts, and famine houses—all these remnants of our ancestors were so stimulating to my imagination. I came off the mountain bursting with enthusiasm, and thus began learning how to use a video camera.

The moment I met Patrick, I knew he would be the single voice for a film. He farms close to the earth, and is open and vulnerable to the wonders of nature, to the echo of the ancestors, and like the people of the Burren, he is full of poetry but grounded in practicality. His life, and his relationship with the elders absorbs us into a truly unique and disappearing way of life, one which I yearned to return to, which I wanted my children to experience—but it was vanishing from our culture.

I wanted to give our unique Irish landscape, and the stories of our lost agrarian culture, a place in our modern society. To evoke our connection back to the earth, to allow nature [to] shape us, and most importantly for us to be gentler with nature, before we completely decimate our world.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theatre?

KC: At a very basic level, I hope that the cinematography, and Patrick's passion for wildlife rekindles in us a love for nature, that perhaps many of us have become disconnected from. As John Moriarty, the Irish philosopher, said, "we are the generation that [is being] educated out of our landscape."

I would like people to feel that they will make more time for themselves to be still and watch the majesty of nature unfold in front of them. The smallest and most ordinary experience—be it a bird gathering soft moss for its nest, a dew drop on a spider web—can be most extraordinary if you allow yourself time to contemplate, and be moved by them.

On a deeper level, I hope that Patrick's intimate introspections—his fears, dreams, challenges, determination, and so forth resonant with people's own experiences—that not only is he telling us all these stories of his own life, he is telling us the stories of our own.

I hope the audience feel so deeply connected to their story, to their own people and place, that they too would risk everything to put a stop to their ancient culture and landscape from been devastated by the pressure of economics, which is leading us down the path of biodiversity oblivion.

Finally, I hope people feel uplifted, that the powers of the universe, and our own resolve can be so great, that we as individuals can make a difference to the world our children, and our children's children will inherit.

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W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

KC: Getting funding was the biggest challenge—I had delays and rejections, and it took me three years to get—but perhaps it wasn't a bad thing. During that time, my camera skills were improving, I got to know the secret places of the Burren, and—as I had no money for childcare—my children had to come with me on shoots. They are peppered all through the film, and they brought nuggets of lightness, wonder, and magic to it. I guess I just made the mother of home movies.

More significantly, Patrick also realized the perseverance and passion that was driving me to make this documentary came from the heart—I guess this established a mutual friendship and trust between us.

It was a challenge—but a fabulous one—to seamlessly interweave all these threads of Patrick's life: his profound and poetic relationship with our unique and ancient Irish culture, the discipline of boxing, the dramatized recreation scenes, the historical archive with the supreme courts, his family life, and his friendship with these wonderful old farmers, which he eulogizes. It became more apparent as we created the story that the battle to preserve the mountain, Mullaghmore, was the top tier of the story but Patrick's own relationship with people and place, and his search for unity of being was the heart. It allowed us to create this multi-tiered story, that has universal resonance with people on many deep levels.

The edit was also a challenge—there was all these beautiful, poetic insights which Patrick shared, and I found it difficult to leave them out. At a draft cut, I was disheartened to be told by a comrade, "It was profundity after profundity." I had to go at it hard with the scissors. Looking back on it, as I shot, directed, and edited it, I was too close, and too intimate with the material; I was too precious with the beautiful wildlife scenes, and the poetry, and found it difficult to kill my babies.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

KC: We were lucky to meet Rory Gilmartin of the Irish Film Board who saw the promo and said, "I'm hooked." It was sweet music to my ear! But he had many reservations. We settled that he'd give us development money to create a promo which blended all these various threads of the story together.

Six months later, Rory committed to fund us the production loan, approximately 50 percent of the film costs. The hardest thing was to get, and align, all the other funding.

Our Irish broadcast stations thought "The Silver Branch" was too creative for TV, and they refused us. We thought we were on the brink of losing the IFB's 50 percent when a small regional TV station, Irish TV, said they'd broadcast it. Unfortunately, [the station] folded. [After a lot of time and effort] we offered the completed, finished film free of charge to the acquisition departments in RTE 1 and 2, TV3, UTV Northern Ireland—all they needed to do was agree to broadcasting it. They declined. Fortunately, we chased down a wonderful lady, who runs a small community TV Station, called Dublin TV, and she rescued us, and will broadcast the film on their station next year.

We also qualified for the tax incentive for the Irish Film Industry.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

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KC: After all that—all those refusals—can you just imagine what this recognition means to us? I'm over the moon, thrilled, excited, and humbled. Not only is it a gratifying acknowledgement of its worthiness in film but it means people will see it, and hopefully it will leave something positive out in the world.

It is an incredible opportunity to network and meet other filmmakers and people within the industry community.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

KC: Best advice: "Never give up—fortune favors the brave."

Worst advice : I can't remember. Obviously it fell on deaf ears.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

KC: There are many ways to tell the same story—but it's what you want people to feel when they watch your movie that counts more than anything else. I don't think anybody else sees it exactly as you do, which is why it's important to stick to your personal vision of how things should unfold in the film—it's your voice, and your dream which will make it work, which is probably the summation of everything that you've felt, and thought, and experienced in your own life's story.

If you need help, ask, listen, and then take only the little bits that you feel is right.

W&H: Name your favourite woman-directed film and why.

KC: "Suffragette," directed by Sarah Gavron. Emily Wilding Davison's bravery was extraordinary—which demonstrates the strength of personal will. Despite all the odds, being force-fed regularly and brutally, and endless dangerous sacrifices including separations from their children, Wildling and other suffragettes never gave up. A single voice can spark people to act to make the whole world a better place.

The execution of the film made their troubles feel immediate and real in my opinion—it was heart-warming, sad, inspirational.

I have three daughters—what a fantastic celebration of women's strength and inspiration to pass on to them.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

KC: A hundred years after Emily Wilding Davison died, votes for women are long since won in most countries, but the feminist revolution continues. I have no personal story of harassment or abuse, and I worked in male environments all my life, but the stories which are being revealed are outrageous on so many levels. Power breeds greed and always has, but I was naive enough to think that sexual harassment from "the boss" was no longer a first world problem. Where is the moral compass of these offenders?

Moving forward, I hope that it does not swing a complete 180 degrees, where women turn excessively slanderous and abusive against all men but rather we strive for equality between men and women.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-katrina-costello-the-silver-branch-ed6f10bb70b7/?gi=3b7642a3ad62>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Paula Eiselt — “93Queen”

BY Laura Berger April 28, 2018

Paula Eiselt is an independent filmmaker. She is currently a POV/Wyncote Filmmaker Fellow and was a 2017 Sundance Creative Producing Summit Fellow and a 2016 IFP Lab fellow.

“93Queen” is her feature directorial debut.

“93Queen” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 29.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

PE: With unprecedented—and insider—access, “93Queen” follows a group of tenacious Hasidic women who are smashing the patriarchy in their community by creating the first all-female volunteer ambulance corps in New York City.

At its core, “93Queen” is about change from within. Change—especially feminism!—can take shape in many different ways; it doesn’t look the same in every community. “93Queen” is a unique and intellectually honest portrayal of what women’s empowerment looks like in the Hasidic world.

It is a universal story in a very particular setting about what happens when women feel empowered to make progress in their own communities, on their own terms, in order to move those communities forward.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

PE: Over five years ago, I was perusing a Yiddish website and came across a photo featuring Hasidic women in lab coats. I read in the accompanying description about Ruchie Freier, a Hasidic woman who was leading her fellow Hasidic women from Brooklyn in creating America’s first all-female volunteer EMT corps. They were called Ezras Nashim, or “women helping women.”

As an Orthodox Jewish woman myself, I immediately understood that the formation of Ezras Nashim would be a significant disruption to cultural norms in the gender-segregated Hasidic community. Another Hasidic ambulance corps called Hatzolah had already “claimed” EMS as a male-only space and wasn’t just opposing, but was actively working against these trailblazing women.

Until that moment, I had never heard of proud Hasidic women challenging the status quo of their own community and refusing to take no for an answer from the all-powerful patriarchy. Their courage and persistence in demanding progress from their own community—even in the face of fierce opposition—is why I made “93Queen.”

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

PE: I want people to consider—or rather re-consider—the many unexpected complexities and challenging narratives regarding progress, faith, leadership, and feminism within this film. My hope is that “93Queen” will intersect with the greater conversations we’re all having right now about change.

“93Queen” also explores a community that is severely stereotyped as monolithic and solely prohibitive, especially when it comes to women. Most of the film’s audiences will have had very little—if any—exposure to the Hasidic community from the inside. It’s important to me for

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people to see Hasidic humanity and diversity, and to feel and relate to these women—to see them as individuals within a larger framework of which they are working to grab hold.

Finally, I want viewers to feel challenged enough to wrestle with preconceived recipes for progress and notions of Hasidic women, preferably to the point of discomfort. Unraveling strong-held assumptions can be really painful and disconcerting, but sitting in that space is the only way to yield intellectual reconstruction.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

PE: The biggest challenge I encountered was actually filming in an environment where media is taboo. In many ways, the making of “93Queen” mirrors the radical formation of Ezras Nashim. In Hasidic culture, secular media is seen as spiritually threatening and women shy away from any sort of public attention. In fact, Hasidic and Ultra-Orthodox publications do not print photos of any women at all. As an insider who understands the laws of modesty and agreed to follow them in the making of the film, I was granted unprecedented and exclusive access to the David-and-Goliath story of Ezras Nashim.

Working within those constraints and sensitivities proved to be extremely challenging, especially since the doc is vérité based. However, in the end, those conditions allowed the authenticity and access to shine through every scene.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

PE: “93Queen” was made by the wondrous support of ITVS and the documentary community. Our first public foray with “93Queen” was actually the 2015 Athena Film Festival, where we were selected to be a part of the festival’s work-in-progress panel.

The first three years of filming were quite lean. We had gotten a starter grant from the Hartley Film Foundation, but things really picked up in 2015 when we were selected for IFP Film Week, at which point we met with a slew of funders including ITVS. We applied to ITVS straight from there and were awarded funding, which was a complete game-changer.

Following our co-production with ITVS, we received funding from The Sundance Institute, with support from Open Society Foundations and Just Films | Ford Foundation; NYSCA; Fork Films; the Gucci Tribeca Doc Fund, with support from the Oath Foundation and Picture Motion; and the IDA Pare Lorentz Doc Fund.

We also got a whole lot of support from the entire staff at Women Make Movies as part of the org’s Production Assistance Program. I was also a 2016 IFP lab fellow as well as a 2017 Sundance Summit Creative Producing fellow—both labs allowed me to forge invaluable relationships with peers and within the industry.

Another critical moment for “93Queen” was the 2017 Hot Docs Pitch Forum, where we not only solidified relationships with foreign distributors, but also won the top first look Pitch Fund cash prize. This additional funding came while we were in the midst of post-production and was instrumental in helping us make it to the finish line.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

PE: Relief and joy that it’s finally over!

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Seriously, though, premiering at one of the world's most prestigious documentary film festivals alongside superb documentaries from around the globe is thrilling and extremely humbling. The fact that we had such a fantastic and formative experience at last year's Pitch Forum makes it all the more rewarding.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

PE: Best advice : Find fulfillment in the actual the process because the successes are so fleeting.

Worst advice : Make films for yourself. While we need to own our vision and be more passionate about our work than probably anything else in our life, films are made to be communal experiences. Other people's opinions do matter—but yours has the most weight.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

PE: Trust your vision, be on the offense not defensive, and ask for help with confidence. Take creative risks and make mistakes like all the men around us to do. Don't let oversights derail your process—fix them and move forward.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

PE: "Selma" by Ava DuVernay. Biopics and films depicting world-altering movements are almost always directed by men. The very fact that DuVernay, a woman of color, was given the reins to tell the story of Martin Luther King Jr. absolutely blew my mind with inspiration and hope. And then I saw the actual film and my inspiration morphed into awe.

DuVernay's directorial poetry—her camera, acting, and sound—is fierce, feminine and perfectly symmetrical, giving "Selma" an authenticity that I often feel is lacking in larger films. It's trailblazing as artistic genius.

"Selma" and DuVernay have forever changed the film industry and embodies our goal for the work ahead.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

PE: It's obviously about time. I experienced the environment that breeds harassment and gender disparity in the film industry from the get-go in film school. As students, we would form our own crews for our film projects and whenever a male was directing the core crew was almost entirely male, with the exception of producers. There were just a couple of female DPs. It was clear and unquestioned that young men trusted each other more with their vision than they did women.

At one of my first internships at a major film production company in NYC, I was asked if I minded being added to a list of babysitters for the company CEO's kids. I doubt any male names were on that list.

The push for equality is essential to thriving and surviving. We must aim for nothing less than the ideal.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-paula-eiselt-93queen-7abb68dd8f7c/?gi=2f7b83b8d6fd>

'Exit Music' Leads Hot Docs Audience Award Rankings

Posted on April 28th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Exit Music

By Pat Mullen

And they're off! The first report on the standings for the Hot Docs Audience Award are out! *Exit Music* leads the early rankings with its emotional story of late subject Ethan Rice, who bravely let director Cameron Mullenneaux film his final days to provide families with a reference point for the experience of end of life decision making. The film played well to the audience last night at the Scotiabank with Rice's parents, brother, and doctor joining Mullenneaux for a touching Q&A. (Stay tuned for the *POV* review.)

On the Canadian front, Michael Del Monte's *Transformer* leads the field for the Canadian Audience Award winner. This engaging flick profiles bodybuilder Janae Croc as she transitions and confronts the difficulty of reconciling her love for strength training and weight-lifting with her desire to feel and look feminine. Pick up a copy of the new *POV* at the Hot Docs Cinema and Isabel Bader to read more about *Transformer* and other docs portraying trans stories.

The Top 20 films in the Audience Award rankings are:

1. *Exit Music*
2. *Transformer*
3. *Queercore: How to Punk a Revolution*
4. *Letter from Masanjia*
5. *The Game Changers*
6. *Three Identical Strangers*
7. *The Silence of Others*
8. *Mr. SOUL!*

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9. I Used to Be Normal: A Boyband Fangirl Story
10. Mercury 13
11. Don't Be Nice
12. A Thousand Girls Like Me
13. Pumpkin Movie
14. Take Light
15. Shirkers
16. Of Fathers and Sons
17. The Heat: A Kitchen @evolution
18. The Artist & the Pervert
19. Maj Doris
20. The Feeling of Being Watched

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Sarah Menzies — “Afghan Cycles”

BY Beandrea July April 28, 2018

Sarah Menzies’ documentary films have screened at Telluride Mountainfilm, Banff Mountain Film Festival, Port Townsend Film Festival, and many other festivals. She directed the documentary shorts “The Mirnavator,” “A Steelhead Quest,” and “Catch It.”

“Afghan Cycles” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 29.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

SM: “Afghan Cycles” started off as a short film about young women riding bicycles in Afghanistan. Over the past five years, it has turned into a coming-of-age story as we’ve watched them grow up and have to make very adult decisions. For some, these are decisions that no one their age should have to make.

Through the duration of the film, we see these women as young and idealistic, but that begins to shift as the security in Afghanistan worsens. By 2015, their tone changed, and for the first time in their adult lives, they felt the direct consequences by choosing to ride. Bicycles have given these women independence, freedom, and mobility. And despite the risks, they are doing what they are most passionate about—no matter the cost.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

SM: When I met these women in 2013, I was drawn to their courage to ride in a place that is not accepting of their sport. But what’s kept me going back and filming them as they grow up is something deeper than that.

I’ve gotten to know them, I care about them, and I feel very responsible for telling their story as authentically and true as I can. They represent what the bicycle, and sports in general, can do for women living in oppressive societies. It has given them freedom and independence, and with this vehicle, they are no longer reliant on a man.

I think that is an important story to share, and I am grateful to these women for trusting me to tell it from their perspective so it can inspire people everywhere.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

SM: One of the main characters faces a tough decision toward the end of the film. Without giving anything away, I hope that the aftermath of her impulsive decision leaves audiences with plenty to think about—what are they most passionate about, and what lengths would they go to be able to keep doing it?

I also hope that after watching the film, viewers will look at the bicycle differently. Perhaps they will see it as the empowering vehicle it is, and that it can offer so much to young women everywhere in terms of freedom and independence.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

SM: There were plenty of challenges along the way, but the most difficult hurdle was the language barrier. I am drawn to personal character-driven films, and to do that well, I work hard to build a solid foundation and relationship with each person I’ve profiled in my films.

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Having a camera in your face is a scary thing—I know it terrifies me. I want to gain the trust of the people I film so that they can be comfortable and at ease with me. I had an incredible translator in Afghanistan that understood the importance of that, but no matter how good the situation was, it's just not the same when you can only communicate with the third person to translate those intimate moments.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

SM: We went the crowdfunding route which was a huge help and really built our audience of super fans early on in production. Liv Cycling came on as a funder within the first year, which essentially gave us our seed money to kick things off. That was really incredible. And since then it's been a mix of me putting in my own money, as well as private individual donors that have joined our crew as executive producers in recent months.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

SM: Hot Docs has been on my short list of “hopeful premiere festivals” ever since we started this film. It will be my first time at the festival, but I've always heard such wonderful things, and I feel like it's a perfect fit.

Honestly, I couldn't be more proud to have my first feature documentary accepted into Hot Docs—it's very surreal for me.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

SM: Best advice: This came to me about seven or eight years ago when I was first taking the leap into this work. A friend said so simply, “What's the worst that could happen? It doesn't work out, and you do something else? That's nothing to be afraid of!” And as cliché and simple as that may sound, it's the advice I hold tightly when I'm having those “what am I doing with my life?!” days.

I just remind myself that I'm doing what I've loved, and I've worked really hard to get here, but if this all falls apart or I don't want to do it any longer, that's perfectly alright and there are many things out there for me to do. I can't imagine doing anything else, but just that seed planted in my brain saying that it's alright if this doesn't work out has been a real driving force for me.

Worst advice: To say yes to everything. In order to keep this film funded and moving forward over the past five years, I've had to say yes to many more things than I would have liked to. As “Afghan Cycles” comes to an end, and I take a deep breath and think about what's next, I feel ready and confident to say no to things that just don't speak to me, and trust that by saying no, that keeps the door open to the things I do want to work on.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

SM: My advice is “jump in—the water's fine!” It feels scary and intimidating, but you just need to go for it. And once you do make the leap, remember to trust yourself, stand up for what you want, protect the people you're profiling in your films, and be true to yourself through the process.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

SM: I am a sucker for anything Lynn Shelton creates and puts out into the world.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about

Women and Hollywood – April 28, 2018 (3 of 3)

their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

SM: I love everything about the #TimesUp movement. I find it really inspiring that it's a movement that's working to make a difference across all industries. In the film industry specifically, I have worked with plenty of wonderful men that I will continue to work with. I have also worked with men who didn't treat me like an equal even though I was the one paying them and directing them.

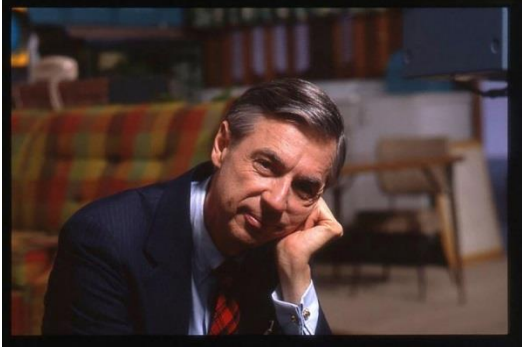
I don't think it's as simple as men versus women. I think that the more this is discussed, the sooner it becomes clear that things need to change—and things are changing—which I'm really excited about as I work to establish myself in this industry. I am grateful for the brave women who came before me who have spoken out, and in doing so, have paved the way for my generation.

There's still a lot of work to be done, but if those brave women remained silenced by those in power, we would not be seeing the progress that we are seeing today.

EXCLUSIVE: Morgan Neville Talks ‘Won’t You Be My Neighbor?’

Hot Docs 2018

By [Jason Gorber](#) • Published April 28th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Fred Rogers on the set of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* as seen in *Won't You Be My Neighbour?*
Jim Judkis / Focus Features

Morgan Neville is the Oscar winning director of *20 Feet From Stardom*, who has made a career of creating such audience embracing docs as *Best of Enemies* and *The Music of Strangers*. His craft is unparalleled, and his deft touch and impeccable credentials make for films that are both highly provocative and intelligent while managing to speak to wide audiences, a rare feat that's nearly unmatched in the world of non-fiction filmmaking.

His latest film, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, was received with great enthusiasm at its Sundance premiere and is making its way through the festival circuit before its theatrical debut this summer. In anticipation of its bow at Hot Docs, Neville spoke to *POV* magazine about this remarkable film about an even more remarkable subject, the pioneer of Children's television, Fred Rogers.—Jason Gorber



POV: Jason Gorber

MN: Morgan Neville

POV: What is your earliest memory of Mr. Rogers?

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MN: Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood was for two to six year olds, so my relationship with Mr. Rogers predates my memory....That's part of how I've seen people react to the film, [in that] we have a relationship with

him that we had with hardly anybody else outside of our family. Part of how we think about him is in our pre-history, before we knew who we were. It accesses a part of your own inner child, who you probably haven't accessed in decades. Watching the footage I would recognize things that I couldn't have remembered otherwise, that were so deep in my earliest possible memories.

POV: In any biopic there's a challenge to avoid hagiography. You want the subject to be more than a two dimensional icon. When you're dealing with a person who helped to form early childhood memories, there's a real danger of creating a simplistic, almost childish, view of what he was.

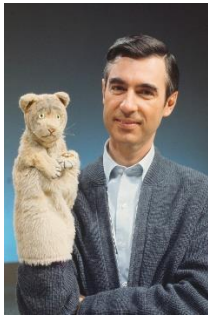
MN: Mr. Rogers is almost the definition of what people think of as a two dimensional character. When I started thinking about the idea of making this film, I kept asking people if this a crazy idea. Mr. Rogers has been a punch line for decades. Are you a serious filmmaker if you're looking at somebody like [him]?

POV: It's as if you are only a "serious filmmaker" if you're there to uncover something awful or troubling, shattering our expectations and finding evil where we thought there was purity.

MN: Exactly! When I told people I was working on the film, so many people said, "oh, so you're going to dig up the dirt," or else warned me, "don't you dare destroy Mr. Rogers!" I had a pretty good idea from the work I did before we started making the film—and talking to people and meeting the family and reading a lot—that he was a much more complex version of the person he played on TV.

The real Fred Rogers wasn't dissonant from his televised character: he was a much deeper harmonic version of that character. He was simple and deep. As a filmmaker, it's very difficult to be simple and deep...The amount of thought and struggle and work that went into [making] a show that seemed so simple felt like a metaphor for work I do every day.

POV: The closer you look, the more remarkable he becomes.



Courtesy The Fred Rogers Company

MN: We don't even go into all of this in the film, but he spoke five languages. He would wake up early in the morning and read the Bible in Hebrew or Greek. He had a sign over his office door that said "Please, Lord, let some of these words that I speak today be yours," or something to that effect. He was struggling and working very hard to make something that seemed so simple.

POV: His struggle and gift was to simplify to the point that he could communicate profoundly, and directly, with young children.

MN: He was willing to be vulnerable at all times and I think that's what kids reacted to. There was no adult artifice. You really have to kind of be vulnerable in the same way to make a film about him. Kids are incredibly direct about what their questions are and what their emotions are. As we grow up, we learn how to mask all of those things. Fred was able to maintain his childlike view and capacity for expressing emotions and a worldview without the pollution of adulthood. It's inspiring.

POV: Is it fair to say that the reflection of all of that has changed not only the way you made this film but also the way you will make subsequent films?

MN: I don't know. For years I told the subject I was working on that making this project was going to be like therapy for [them]. It took me a long time to realize that making each film is therapy for me, too! None more so than this film. It made me question lots of things about my value system. I really wanted the film to try and ask the questions Fred was asking of me, as a filmmaker, to the audience. Fred was not ever about tidy answers, he was all about questions. And I think as a filmmaker, I'm so much more interested in questions than answers.

POV: This a fascinating cousin or companion piece to *Best of Enemies*.

MN: They're definitely related.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – April 28, 2018 (4 of 5)

POV: *Best of Enemies* is about conservative vs. liberal discourse, how that combative discourse originated, but also how both sides became simplified. What you do with Rogers is show, for me, the most pure form of compassionate conservatism I've ever seen expressed.

MN: I've made several films about finding common ground. I think *Best of Enemies* was about that, and I think even *Music of Strangers* was about it. A lot of what I wanted to do with *Ugly Delicious* was about it too. It's something I come back to again and again.

A lot of what happens in documentary film, not to mention political journalism, is about preaching to the converted. And I feel I had a real opportunity here to make a film...where we can have a common discussion. Fred was a Republican minister, but at the same time, a lot of people look at his values and say they were very liberal. [We] kind of step back and ask questions about how our relationship to Fred Rogers predates any political labeling. Our affection for him isn't tied up in any sense of partisanship, of which we find all kinds in our culture. So he's a unique figure to ask these kinds of questions...Can we agree on loving thy neighbour? Can we agree on a sense of empathy and understanding? Fred even says it in the film, "I'm not doing this to be Pollyanna. I'm not a wimp." He was anything but; he was somebody who was a warrior for love and peace in that way.

POV: Like a certain longhaired Jew that he seemed to like. They made a musical about him. It was a whole thing 2000 years ago.

MN: I think Fred was trying to instill something into everybody who grew up watching him—a certain value system, which is really a humanist [view] of how we should treat and love each other and ourselves. When people ask me who's the next Fred Rogers, or who's the Mr. Rogers of today, I think what Joanne Rogers told me in the film. The question of what would Fred do or think, that's the wrong question, because Fred's dead. The question he would want to ask is what are you going to do? Fred's legacy is in all of us. He taught so many millions of us...Whatever little bit he left behind of his own message...is really the legacy we should be focusing on. It's what I ended the film on, because to me that's more empowering.



Courtesy The Fred Rogers Company

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POV: And you can provide that legacy without sanctifying his image

MN: Joanne said to me when we first met was, “Don’t make him into a saint.” I think the importance...[and] wisdom of that is that it both makes him human, which he very much was, but it also shows that one has to struggle to do good. To sanctify Fred is to say that he existed in another place and we don’t have to measure up. It absolves us from responsibility. I think that’s the opposite of what Fred would have wanted. I think he wanted everybody to take responsibility for themselves and for each other.

POV: And your film is constructed in a way for us to engage with this responsibility, not to preach to us a particular vision of the man.

MN: When I think about some of my all-time favourite films — *All the President’s Men*, *F for Fake* — [they’re] films with a lot of questions in them. I started my career as a journalist and I still think what I’m doing is a form of journalism. I think it’s a career of asking questions and a career of curiosity. Acknowledging our lack of having all of the answers is the wisest path we can choose. To make films that are polemical—it’s not only bad filmmaking, it’s bad politics. Whenever somebody tells me what to think in a film, I instantly tune out. When somebody invites me to come to my own conclusions, I am hooked.

It’s empowering, and I think trusting your audience is a huge part of what that’s about. I think about that all the time, letting an audience jump to their own conclusions or be ahead of you, as a storyteller, and then rewarding them for being ahead of you.

I think there are any number of ways you can think about 2018 as a context for this film, though I never wanted to mention any of that. I feel like it’s up to the viewer to bring that, and I feel that, if anything, in the editing, I cut out a number of moments that would have been much more heavy-handed. I didn’t want to have people alienated by the film or feel that I was trying to make a point about Fred, because I wasn’t.

I was trying to ask questions.

Won’t You Be My Neighbor? screens:

-Sat, Apr. 28 at 6:30 PM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema (Scotiabank Big Ideas screening)

-Sun, Apr. 29 at 1:00 PM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

-Sun, May 6 at 12:45 PM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

It opens theatrically June 6.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/exclusive-morgan-neville-talks-wont-you-be-my-neighbor>

CBC Ici Radio Canada – April 28, 2018

Hot Docs 2018 : *Snowbirds* de Joannie Lafrenière ou le désir de fuir l'hiver

Publié le samedi 28 avril 2018

Un contenu vidéo est disponible pour cet article



Rencontre avec Joannie Lafrenière

VIDÉO - La cinéaste et photographe Joannie Lafrenière présente cette semaine au festival du documentaire Hot Docs son premier long-métrage documentaire, *Snowbirds*.

Dans *Snowbirds*, la réalisatrice Joannie Lafrenière part à la rencontre d'une communauté de Québécois qui passent leurs hivers au chaud.

Installés dans un parc de maisons mobiles de la Floride, ces joyeux retraités ne parlent pas un mot d'anglais, mais coulent des jours heureux sous le soleil de leur deuxième chez eux.

Le 25e festival du documentaire Hot Docs se poursuit jusqu'au 6 mai 2018.

<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1097866/floride-snowbirds-documentaire-quebecois-hotdocs>

Shocking account of Jean's murder told by now-dead Dolours Price in new documentary



6

6 *Dolours Price in her Dublin home in 2010*

By **Suzanne Breen**

April 28 2018

Former IRA woman Dolours Price is heard describing the abduction, murder and secret burial of Jean McConville in unprecedented detail in a new documentary.

I, Dolours, which premieres this weekend at the Hot Docs festival in Toronto, features a video-recorded interview that journalist Ed Moloney conducted with her.

It includes new revelations about the 1972 murder of Mrs McConville, the Belfast mother-of-10 whom the IRA alleged was an informer.

In previous interviews Price confessed her role in driving Mrs McConville across the border and handing her over to a Dundalk IRA unit.

It was believed those republicans then murdered the Belfast woman, whose body was found in Shelling Hill beach, Co Louth, in 2003.

But Price reveals that while the Dundalk IRA members had dug a grave for Mrs McConville, they refused to shoot her. Price and two other members of a secret Belfast IRA unit, the 'Unknowns', then returned across the border and took Mrs McConville to the grave, where she was shot dead by one of them.

Price also repeats claims Mrs McConville was an informer and details an alleged incident in a west Belfast barracks where she identified IRA members to the security forces from behind a blanket with eye slits in it.

It is alleged that the suspects were in turn able to identify Mrs McConville from her slippers, which weren't hidden by the blanket.

Mrs McConville's children last night dismissed Price's claims that their mother was an informer and said the story about the barracks was "nonsense".

But they said they did accept parts of Price's testimony which were supported by other independent accounts.

Belfast Telegraph – April 28, 2018 (2 of 3)

Price had previously alleged that Gerry Adams ordered Mrs McConville's murder, a claim the former Sinn Fein president has strongly denied.

Price was found dead at her home in Malahide, Co Dublin, in 2013 from a toxic prescription drugs mix. The 61-year-old was the former wife of actor Stephen Rea, with whom she had two sons.

She was born into a staunchly republican family in Belfast. Along with her sister Marian, she joined the IRA as a teenager. Their father Albert was a prominent 1940s IRA man and their mother Chrissie had been in Cumann na mBan.

Along with Gerry Kelly, now a Sinn Fein MLA, the sisters were part of the IRA unit that bombed the Old Bailey in 1973. They were arrested making at Heathrow Airport.

The sisters were force-fed hundreds of times in Brixton Prison where they had gone on hunger strike as part of their campaign to be repatriated to Armagh Prison.

Before Dolours Price was arrested in London she had been a very active member of the Belfast IRA.

In I, Dolours, her videotaped interview with Moloney in Dublin in 2010 is interspersed by director Maurice Sweeney with historical re-enactments of her IRA career in which Price is played by an actress.

Price told Moloney that the Unknowns were selected on the basis that they "could be trusted with very specific jobs, obeying orders without question".

The unit was run by IRA man Pat McClure, who reported to the Belfast Brigade OC (officer commanding). One of Price's duties was to drive people the IRA believed were informers across the border to be killed.

She repeats the story that the IRA had discovered a radio transmitter in Mrs McConville's home, which she was allegedly using to supply information to the British Army. Price also told Moloney that IRA members arrested and taken to Hastings Street Barracks in the lower Falls were "identified by a person concealed behind a blanket" with eye slits.

But it "stopped short of her feet" and the republicans identified the informer as Mrs McConville, because they "recognised the slippers".

Price claims that under IRA interrogation Mrs McConville confessed to becoming an informer "for money".

A 2006 Police Ombudsman report found no evidence to suggest she was an informer.

Price says when she picked her up, Mrs McConville wasn't frightened for her life because she had been told by the IRA that she wouldn't be killed, but would be moved to another area by the Legion of Mary. Price realised Mrs McConville was a mother when she asked if her children could join her.

Belfast Telegraph – April 28, 2018 (3 of 3)

Price says the Dundalk IRA men had "a grave dug" but "couldn't bring themselves to execute" Mrs McConville "probably because she was a woman".

So Price, McClure (who died in the US in 1986) and a third member of the Unknowns - whom the Belfast Telegraph has been told is still alive - took Mrs McConville to the grave where she was "shot in the back of the head by one of the volunteers". There was one pistol but Price indicates the trio all fired it separately so they took shared responsibility for the execution and "no one would say that they for certain had been the person to kill her".

However, only one bullet was recovered and a post-mortem found Mrs McConville had died from a single gunshot wound to the head.

Republican sources have told the Belfast Telegraph that Price and McClure fired to miss, but the third IRA member did not.

Asked how she felt about the IRA "disappearing" people, Price says: "I think it's a war crime."

She admits being haunted by her role in the deaths. "I think back on those who I had responsibility for driving away.

"I'm not a deeply religious person, but I would say a prayer for them," she states.

Mrs McConville's daughter Helen McKendry said: "During the dig for my mother in Shelling Hill beach, local republicans told us the Dundalk IRA had no part in our mother's murder. Dolours Price's account is in keeping with that.

"Her story about my mother at Hastings Street barracks is ridiculous. My mother was abducted from our home by the IRA, wearing slippers.

"But while we had very little money, my mother would never have gone out to a barracks or anywhere else in slippers. And what information would a mother-of-10 have had on the IRA anyway?"

Mrs McKendry said she was angry that the informer allegations persisted. "Repeating these claims about my mother is very hurtful. She died over 40 years ago and should be allowed to rest in peace. I don't think this film should have been made."

Mrs McConville's son Michael said: "There is some truth in what Dolours Price said, but other bits are fantasy.

"She was deeply troubled by her part in my mother's death and clearly needed help to deal with that.

"The story about my mother in the barracks makes no sense. When the IRA spoke to me, they told me my mother had given information which led to a gun being seized, but that was later proved to be untrue.

"The IRA never at any stage mentioned anything about a blanket in a barracks." Mr McConville added: "I know the name of the person who killed my mother. It is not Dolours Price."

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/shocking-account-of-jeans-murder-told-by-nowdead-dolours-price-in-new-documentary-36853101.html>

Hot Docs: Scott Jones on embracing love over fear in **Love, Scott**

April 28, 2018 Sonya Davidson Arts, Film

In 2013, Scott Jones was attacked in a small town in Nova Scotia for being gay, an attack that resulted in him being paralyzed from the waist down. His life changed forever. Constantly faced with challenges and obstacles, Scott has had to rebuild his life. A new documentary **LOVE, SCOTT** (North American Premiere) will be screening at the 2018 Hot Docs film Festival. Filmmaker Laura Marie Wayne, a close friend of Scott's, accompanied him for three years after his attack and now shares this emotional and intimate story as well as sharing his voice of not having his attack recognized as a hate crime by the courts. From the first fragile moments in the hospital to a visit back to where his attack took place, we learn how he embraces love over fear as well as question who really decides what "truth" is.

When Laura first found out about Scott's attack, she was living at a remote film school in Cuba. Her mother was the one who finally got a hold of her and gave her the devastating news. It was only a year prior that Scott was with her in Cuba. But now he was in a hospital in Halifax. She returned to be by her best friend's side. Over the next year she would also get updates on what Scott was doing even though he was paralysed. He's started the "Don't Be Afraid" photo campaign and began speaking at schools across the country. He formed a choir. He was touted as one of the most inspiring citizens by The Chronicle Herald. He ultimately forgave his attacker publicly. However, deep down inside, Laura knew there was a private side of Scott that was still hurting and needed to be told. She witnessed his pain but also his resilience and the true meaning of unconditional love.



We had a chance to chat with Scott and Laura about the documentary.

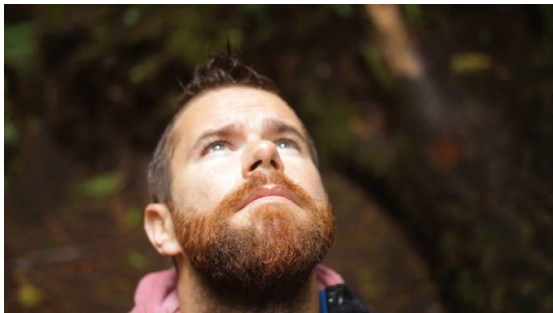
Laura, tell us a little bit more about Scott?

Toronto Guardian – April 28, 2018 (2 of 3)

LMW: Scott has always been a spontaneous, outgoing and compassionate person, and I was immediately drawn to him because of his open heart and sensitivity. He was and still is an incredibly talented musician, and one of the most spontaneous and adventurous people I know.

Because of your friendship, Scott could completely trust you with this very personal story of his. What was the most difficult part of this process for you?

LMW: I felt a tremendous responsibility to get the story right and tell the story in a way that did justice to the depth of loss and grief that Scott experienced, while at the same time honouring his bravery and resilience in the face of such a horrific act.



How about you, Scott? When did you feel like it was the right time to tell your story?

SJ: It's not that there was a right time to tell my story, this process unfolded organically. Because of our close friendship of 12 years, I was able to confide in Laura about some of the darker experiences related to this attack. The film emerged out of a need to voice my truth and shed light on an important part of my story that had not been given weight.

What's your relationship like with Laura? How did that impact the way this documentary was created?

SJ: When I met Laura, it felt like finding an old friend. This deep trust and sense of connection allowed me to share some of the most intimate details of my journey since the attack.

You're a musician, and we know that music heals. But how has that helped you move forward?

SJ: Music has always been a part of my life. Growing up as a gay kid, I turned to the piano to work through the emotions associated with being closeted in a small town. After the attack, music once again became a cathartic tool, eventually leading to the exploration of choir as a means for social change – a merging of music and activism.

Toronto Guardian – April 28, 2018 (3 of 3)

Laura, what's the message you'd like people to understand, or to know, about you now?

LMW: In the wake of such a traumatic experience I have come to believe in the importance of being kind to oneself, and of honouring and nurturing the inner child.

And bringing Scott's story to Hot Docs, what are you looking forward to?

LMW: I'm looking forward to the opportunity to have Scott's story received by such a wide audience and for it to generate much-needed conversations around queer experience and hate crime legislation in Canada.

LOVE, SCOTT will have its North American Premiere at the **2018 Hot Docs Film Festival**.

Screenings are scheduled for April 28, 29 and May 3. There will be a Q&A after the screening on April 28. The film is one of five premieres among the 21 National Film Board of Canada (NFB) documentaries that are showcased at this year's Hot Docs Festival. For more information visit www.hotdocs.ca

Hot Docs review: Love, Gilda

Documentary about the short life and brilliant career of comedy legend Gilda Radner will break your heart

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

APRIL 28, 2018

10:00 PM



LOVE, GILDA (Lisa D'Apolito, U.S.). 84 minutes. Rating: NNNN

In a lot of ways, *Love, Gilda* follows the standard celebrity biopic template from humble beginning to tragic end. But because it's about **Gilda Radner**, that template illuminates a magnificent talent.

Narrated by Radner herself (via the audiobook of her autobiography *It's Always Something*), with latter-day *Saturday Night Live* cast members like **Amy Poehler**, **Bill Hader** and **Maya Rudolph** reading from her letters and notebooks, it's a chronological look at the comedian's short life and brilliant career, filled with celebrity guests and compelling anecdotes.

Love, Gilda summarizes Radner's entire life, starting with her subject's upper-middle-class childhood in Detroit – concerned about her weight, her mother put her on Dexedrine at the age of 10, sparking a lifetime of food and health issues – and rolling through her time in Toronto, her incandescent SNL run, her subsequent movie career and relationship with **Gene Wilder**, a love story that ended far too soon. (Radner died of ovarian cancer in 1989.)

NOW Magazine – April 28, 2018 (2 of 2)

Director **Lisa D'Apolito** does a fine job of coordinating the material and letting Radner speak for herself, confronting her body and health issues respectfully but not delicately. And as the end draws near, the film is honest about that too, with home videos of Radner and Wilder that'll break your goddamn heart.

April 28, 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; April 29, 1:15 pm, TIFF 1; May 3, 4:15 pm, Hot Docs Cinema; May 5, 9 pm, Isabel Bader

Hot Docs 2018: Three Identical Strangers

Rob Trench

(A word of warning, I would recommend going into *Three Identical Strangers* knowing as little as possible, as its impact will certainly be stronger not knowing anything more than the basic plotline and the title).

The first 30 or so minutes of Tim Wardle's *Three Identical Strangers* sets the audience up for a fun, wistful experience. Three 19-year-old men; Bobby Shafran, Eddy Galland, and David Kellman, discover they are triplets separated at birth, and find they all share exceptional similarities. Soon they become the talk of the world, appearing on the front page of every newspaper, interviewed on a plethora of talk shows, and cause a frenzy everywhere they go as the identical siblings that found each other.

We learn about the range of distinct family environments they were raised in, the conspicuous similarities they held in adolescence, the types of parental figures which helped forge their personalities, and the pathways that led to their meeting for the first time. It helps a lot that Bobby, Eddy, and David are all quite personable and jovial, showcasing an electric eccentricity to their meeting that permeates over several years as they eventually move in and start a business together. It has all the makings of a larger-than-life, stranger than fiction scenario.

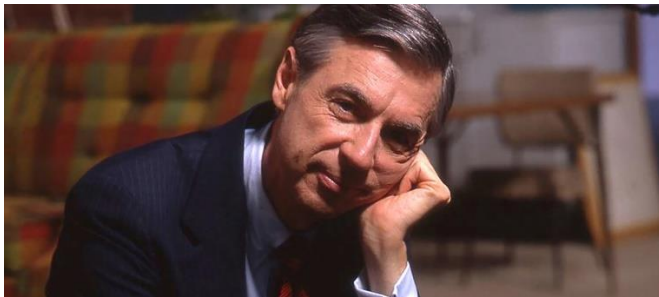
And then, the story takes a step backward, as the mystery behind the decision to alter their lives comes forth, revealing a dark and sinister undercurrent. It goes without saying that this section of *Three Identical Strangers* will certainly cause viewers to pontificate on not just the nature vs. nurture debate that has formed the basis of several scientific studies, but the ethical parameters that go into altering a family dynamic and the ensuing, undoable damage that takes place years later. There are twists and turns that will make jaws drop, and there is plenty of emotional stakes as we see these men confronting their past several decades later, reconciling with added insights previously unknown to them.

Talk Film Society – April 28, 2018 (2 of 2)

Well paced at a brisk 90 minutes and moving through each section without too much of an abrupt tonal shift, even when venturing into unsettling territory, *Three Identical Strangers* comes well recommended, in the same vein as other shocking mystery-focused docs like *Tickled* or *The Imposter*. For its ability to express a deeply humane approach to siblings being torn apart by forces beyond their control, it's bound to be one of the year's most talked about and celebrated documentaries.

Hot Docs Review: 'Won't You Be My Neighbor?' is an Ode to a Beloved Figure in Children's Television

APRIL 28, 2018 FERDOSA ABDI



Won't You Be My Neighbor? is perfectly crafted to maximize tears and laughter from audience, even from the most cynical. It's an honest, genuine and hopeful portrait of one the most important figures in children's programming.

Fred Rogers is no longer with us, but the documentary makes it very clear that his spirit and message still resonate through *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, which impacted so many lives. His love, devotion and beliefs pushed him to fight for the well-being of children and in doing so bettering the world. He wasn't overly ambitious, but he certainly got close to accomplishing this. His goal in life was to ensure that children were given an enriched childhood where they are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. And that when these children got older, they would carry those lessons with them as proactive and positive members of society.

Directed by Morgan Neville, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* also does good job at demystifying Mr. Rogers. He wasn't a saint, nor was he free of troubles. Like many, he struggled and stumbled. Ultimately, the documentary is a beautiful love letter to a man whose humanity shone bright, whose ambitions were honest and true, and whose message is very much needed today.

***Won't You Be My Neighbor?* screens Saturday, April 28th, Sunday, April 29th and Sunday, May 6th at Hot Docs. Its runtime is 1 hr. 33 min.**

<http://www.thereelroundup.com/2018/04/wont-you-be-my-neighbor-hot-docs-review.html>

Scene Creek – April 28, 2018

Hot Docs Review: The Cleaner

The Cleaners is a masterfully executed look into one of the most important conversations of our time, content moderation.

ANDREW HAMILTON

APRIL 28, 2018

Centralizing around a team of content moderators in Manila, Philippines, *The Cleaners* sheds a much needed light on the mental extremities of the job, and the controversial place it holds in our tech driven world. The conversation isn't as simple as that however, as the documentary begins to look at the bigger picture of internet responsibility and who specifically it should fall on.

What *The Cleaners* does so well is starting conversation. While the documentary is informative and presents it's own biases, it knows when to draw the line. Hans Block and Moritz Riesewieck wrap it all up beautifully with visuals that can only be described as cinematic delights. This documentary feels like an arthouse film, and with wonderful sound design and score, you'll be hard pressed to believe it's not at times.

It must be noted that the documentary also holds an extremely clean aesthetic in it's design elements, a layer of presentation that most docs stumble on. It gives life to the story being read, and creates a polished product that can't be ignored.

In a time of misinformation, *The Cleaners* in all of it's mastery, is beyond topical. It is a necessary moment of reflection that could shape the future of information as we know it.

<http://scenecreek.com/hot-docs-2018-review-cleaners/>

Scene Creek – April 28, 2018

Hot Docs 2018 Review: The Trolley

DANI SAAD

APRIL 28, 2018

This year, Hot Docs will host its first-ever IMAX screening at Cinesphere with the world premiere of *The Trolley*, director Stephen Low's ode to the streetcar. *The Trolley* quite simply tells the history of the streetcar which upon invention, quickly spread to urban centres and revolutionized cities, mobility and economic development. The presentation is straightforward and focused solely on the trolley's storied past. With how beautiful this film looks, the streetcar is truly getting the star treatment that Low and streetcar enthusiasts undoubtedly feel it deserves.

The Trolley tracks the history of the streetcar internationally but Toronto is a fixture of the film as one of the last bastions of municipal tram support, even in the 1960s when the streetcar was nearly left behind entirely (damn you, cars!). There is a lot of ground to cover here and the way history is integrated into this film is really remarkable. The streetcar, despite being an early invention, is the most environmentally friendly mode of public transit. It has historical charm, gets people around with great efficiency, and builds community, and Low has little sympathy for anyone who feels differently (Fun fact: Low is the son of IMAX inventor and documentary pioneer Colin Low).

The Trolley may not hold everyone's interest, but for those at all intrigued by the history of Toronto or transit, or those who just appreciate a well-made film, it really doesn't get much better, or better looking, than this.

<http://scenecreek.com/hot-docs-2018-review-trolley/>

Hot Docs 2018 Review: What Walaa Wants

DANI SAAD

APRIL 28, 2018

What Walaa Wants tells story of Walaa, a young Palestinian raised in the West Bank's Balata Refugee Camp, who dreams of becoming a policewoman despite her outspokenness and restless nature. Following Walaa from 15 to 21, director Christy Garland shoots from when Walaa's mother, Latifa, is released from an Israeli prison, and continues until Walaa is working her first job. Considering the arc of this coming-of-age story, Garland does well to depict a real journey, even within the limited runtime.

Walaa grew up largely without her mother who was imprisoned for eight years and also without a father, who left to start another family in Jordan. Her outlook on marriage, men, gender expectations, and the status quo more generally are clearly rooted in her lived experience. Beyond her difficulties at home, the general pressures of being a teenager in Balata are no joke, and Garland does well to capture that reality even while using the sometimes reductive slice-of-life format.

The most interesting parts of the film are centred on Walaa, her home life, and the everyday interaction this family has with oppression. The film spend a bit too much time on Walaa's professional development; these scenes are the most predictable even if key to her growing up. An underlying theme in this film is how kids, including Walaa, are forced to grow up with alarming speed in Walaa's world and children are fluent in the darker aspects of adult struggles at a young age.

Aided by an atmosphere full of political and social tension, *What Walaa Wants* leaves much for the audience to unpack but never loses sight of its main protagonist, whose story being told is alone an act of peaceful resistance.

<http://scenecreek.com/hot-docs-2018-review-walaa-wants/>

Review: 'Call Her Ganda'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published April 28th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Call Her Ganda

(USA, 97 min.)

Dir. PJ Raval

Programme: World Showcase (International Premiere)

The headline at the movies this year might be gender parity and #MeToo, and rightfully so, but one would be remiss to overlook the notable transgender stories at Hot Docs and within the film scene more broadly. Films like Michael Del Monte's compelling *Transformer*, for example, with its fascinating study of gender roles, performance, and power in the tale of weightlifting Janae Croc. (See the [current issue](#) of *POV* for an article on the topic by Matt Hays that looks at films such as *Transformer*, [Barbara Kopple's *This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous*](#), and Yance Ford's 2017 Hot Docs selection/Oscar nominee *Strong Island*.) Essential to this growing field, and second only to *Strong Island* is the exceptionally powerful *Call Her Ganda* directed by PJ Raval. This doc is a significant tale of the fight to see trans rights as human rights and to confront the greater systems of power that continue to compound inequality. It's a tough but vital film.

Call Her Ganda examines the tragic and violent murder of Filipina trans woman Jennifer Laude, who died at the hands of US Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton. Haunting images of Jennifer show a tall, proud, and vivacious woman in the prime of her life. Visits with her mother Julita, sure to be one of the unforgettable subjects in documentary this year, convey a family filled with love and now, heartache. The doc lays out the facts of the case through interviews with Julita's lawyer, Virgie Saurez, and with investigative journalist Meredith Talusan, herself a transgender woman who identifies strongly with Jennifer. Both parties explain how Jennifer left a bar with Pemberton and went to a hotel to fool around. They explain how Pemberton left the hotel alone and how Jennifer's friend found her body in the bathroom, a victim of a violent act of rage. When Pemberton later takes the stand, his lawyers claim self-defence in a statement of outright transphobia.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – April 28, 2018 (2 of 2)

Complications ensue as Saurez and Talusan explain the difficulty of trying Pemberton, since the Americans enjoy protection under the Visiting Forces Agreement, which lets Uncle Sam keep jurisdiction over his rowdy troops. We learn that the American boys are reared on a history of violence and misogyny, which Raval illustrates brilliantly through some archival army reels that talk about off-duty leisure hours as free time for soldiers to use the “exotic” locals as they please. It’s clear that the agreement perpetuates grievous injustice. Before Pemberton’s trial, no U.S. soldier had been convicted in Filipino court.

The Pemberton case became a watershed moment for transgender rights in the Philippines. *Call Her Ganda* gives voice to several members of the transgender community in the Philippines, who bravely took to the streets and rallied for their rights and survival. The media exposure from the case was invaluable and, as Raval captured members of the community refusing to be branded as undesirables who “deserve” violent fates, the doc conveys a passionate fight for survival that audiences everywhere need to hear. Pemberton is so obviously guilty—like O.J. level guilty—and his defendants actively perpetuate transphobia by calling Jennifer by male pronouns and her birth name “Jeffrey.” The case tragically speaks to the failures of recognizing the needs and rights of victims of hate crimes.

Laude’s death also became a lightning rod for the increasingly tense relationship between the Philippines and long entrenched colonial force of the United States of America. Laude’s death is a direct result of decades of colonial exploitation and jingoist entitlement over the Philippines. The film incisively articulates how ongoing human rights abuses result from systemic inequality and colonial rule. Raval interrogates the murder case from all angles and reveals the unmistakable links between the loss of Laude’s life, the disregard for transgender rights, and the colonial influence. It’s intelligently intersectional in its dissection of current affairs.

Call Her Ganda takes audiences through a gripping roller coaster of emotions. Saurez and Talusan are compelling guides throughout the film, and their investment in Laude’s story asks audiences to recognize that more victims are sure to come should the courts fail to deliver justice. Laude’s family is the heart of the film, however, and the love for their daughter, sister, aunt, and friend shows that they (and she) deserve justice.

Call Her Ganda

- Sat, Apr. 28 at 9:15 PM at Isabel Bader
- Sun, Apr. 29 at 3:45 PM at TIFF Lightbox
- Sun, May 6 at 5:45 PM at Scotiabank

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-call-her-ganda>

Review: 'The Trolley'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Jason Gorber](#) • Published April 28th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



The Trolley

(Canada, 45min)

Dir. Stephen Low

Programme: Special Events & Big Ideas Series

Canadian documentarian Stephen Low is one of those old school IMAX filmmakers, gifted with using the massive canvas of the large-format frame to both engage and enthrall often young audiences. His *Titanica* was a formative film. I've still got it on Laserdisc, a preposterous compromise compared to seeing the 15perf 70mm presentation screened in the early '90s, but still a fine look at that famous bit of transportation failure.

With *The Trolley*, Low sets his sights on another 45 minute edu-taining doc, one best suited to school trips. He's fashioned a love letter to the streetcar, which Low implies is the apotheosis of public transport, and the key to not only the character of the cities in which they run but the very future of clean, efficient public transport.

Through archive footage and some contemporary rides along both antique and new models, we're treated to a theme park journey through time on the urban light rail systems that once dominated city streets. The trolley in the early 20th century was a plebeian, quotidian system of movement that eschewed smoke and scat and brought the everyman and everywoman to their respective destinations.

This is a highly romanticised vision for the wheeled chariot of the people, with a slightly portentous narration giving a solemnity to some of the more straightforward imagery. The film inadvertently echoes the opening of Lars Von Trier's equally transportation fetishizing *Zentropa*, although, in fairness, *The Trolley* doesn't dance with Nazi imagery like that other film.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – April 28, 2018 (2 of 2)

As a pedagogical work, we do learn a few things, particularly about the evolution of the world's urban transportation systems, but that's only a minor piece in what otherwise is a full-on love letter to these devices. The celebration takes odd turns—a cutting dig at the mole-like brethren of the trolley, the underground subway, seems particularly unnecessary. Plus, for pure accuracy, it would have been nice to have a few shots of the Queen Street line with some beached red rocket flashing its four way blinkers, stopping both car and streetcar traffic, while locked into its tracks, unable to think outside its singular path. Carnival breakdowns make the evening news, while the common occurrence of one of these vehicles blocking the way for all, warrants nary a blip. Nor, of course, was mention made of when the streetcar makes the news for being the site of turmoil, be it the drunken, vomitous behaviour of club goers through to a mentally ill individual gunned down by local police, embroiling the city in a years long debate about use of force.

Still, while this is no film for journalistic rigour, it does manage to make something of the trolley's humble commute, turning it into a more heightened, near mythic way of transportation.

Projected on the massive screen, the undercarriage suspension or even the whirling washing treatments are made to feel wondrous. We glide along the rails with a sense of glee, the smooth ride providing a built-in Steadicam like experience. At its best, *The Trolley* makes one appreciate the simple things that we take for granted; at its worst, it's an affable demi-hour of time spent enjoying some pretty pictures on a very big screen.

The cynical may not completely go along with the ride it takes us on, but as both spectacle and celebration, *The Trolley* gets the job done, serving both as a work of advocacy and as a way for schoolchildren and adults alike to rethink how the movement of people shapes, in fundamental ways, the cities we call home.

The Trolley screens"

-Sat, May 5 at 3:00 PM at Cinesphere

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'Laila at the Bridge'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Liam Lacey](#) • Published April 28th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Laila at the Bridge

(Canada/Afghanistan, 96 min)

Dir. Gulistan Mirzaei and Elizabeth Mirzaei

Program: The Good Fight (North American Premiere)

A young mother in a traditional Afghanistan scarf and shawl speaks to the camera as she prepares a syrupy mixture in a bottle for her crying baby. The baby begins to suckle, and quickly falls asleep. No wonder: the drink contains opium, the prevalence of which has been a secondary effect of the interminable war there.

In the last few years, a number of news stories have focused on the Pul-i-Sokhta bridge over the Kabul River in western Kabul, a dark underpass where hundreds of heroin addicts gather to fix, watched by curious passing workers and students. The addicts' presence is a direct result of the ongoing war, as programs of crop eradication have been abandoned because of a lack of foreign funding and insurgent attacks. Thousands of farmers have returned to opium production, producing 90% of the world's heroin supply and entrapping about 11% of Afghanistan's population in drug use.

In the midst of this unforgiving world, *Laila at the Bridge* focuses on an irrepressible character, a roundly built woman in her mid-thirties named Laila Haidari, who has taken on the task of saving as many of the drug users as she can. This up-close documentary on her work is directed by Los Angeles-based filmmakers, Gulistan Mirzaei, who is Afghani, and his partner Elizabeth Mirzaei (who have directed short films for BBC and Al-Jazeera) and produced by Montreal's Ina Fichman, with Canadians Andrea Henriquez on editing and Jessica Moss on music. The filmmakers' familiarity with Kabul makes for a refreshing lack of self-consciousness, as they take us behind the scenes in political meetings or among the wretched of the city.

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While the bridge of the title is a real place, the title echoes Lord Macaulay's popular Victorian poem, *Horatius at the Bridge*, about a hero single-handedly preventing the sacking of Rome, but also the familiar metaphor of rehab as a bridge between addiction and sobriety.

The crew unobtrusively follows Laila on her daily rounds, moving among garbage and passed-out bodies under the bridge in her ballet slippers, seeking out converts. She brings the users to the separate shelters for men and women, introduces them to their new quarters and the house rules, and then makes the rounds trying to raise money. The clinics, which she runs with her recovered addict older brother, have no access to methadone or medical treatment. Instead, they use makeshift methods: ice-cold baths, Narc-Anon group therapy, encouragement and scolding. The inmates, many of whom are older than her, humbly call her "mother" (her centre is a three-room compound called "Mother's Camp") offer shame and gratitude.

The backstory and context are filled in with interviews: Laila, an Afghanistan refugee in Iran, was married at 12 to a man with whom she had three children. She divorced him at 21, got a university education and moved back to her Afghanistan, forced to leave her children behind. Moved by the plight of Kabul's addicts, she decided to take action. One of the ways she tries to support her clinics is by running a restaurant, staffed by recovering drug-users. When customers are scared away by renewed violence from the Taliban, she has to lobby harder with the local politicians, unabashedly calling them out for their complicity with the drug traffickers.

One striking scene sees her confronting a group of young men at the bridge, gawking at the addicts below them. She upbraids them, and when they answer back, she grabs a stick and confronts them, declaring, "I am more badass than all of you put together."

Is there really a Dali word for "bad-ass"? If so, Laila must be the embodiment of it. By attacking the drug trade, she risks death. In one scene, she describes how a man attempted to strangle her in her room, but she managed to break his grip and grab the shotgun she keeps for self-protection. She points the gun at the camera to demonstrate and the filmmakers shrink back. You understand in a flash the respect she demands and how motivated the filmmakers were to do her story justice.

Laila at the Bridge screens:

- Mon, Apr. 30 at 6:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox
- Tues, May 1 at 10:30 AM the Isabel Bader
- Fri, May 4 at 8:30 PM at Scotiabank

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-laila-at-the-bridge>

Review: 'Nothing without Us'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Amy Siegel](#) • Published April 28th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Nothing Without Us: The Women Who Will End AIDS

(USA, 67 minutes)

Dir. Harriet Hirshorn

Programme: Silence Breakers (International Premiere)

Nothing Without Us demands we learn the names of women activists across the globe in the fight to end HIV/AIDS. The fight for visibility, recognition and access to services is impeded by gender, race, location and economic disparities. *Nothing Without Us* addresses these issues head on by centring the voices of those most affected by the virus. All of the main characters are women of colour living with HIV and working within their communities. Most of them are doing this vital work today, right now. This is what makes the film so important: it represents HIV/AIDS as it is today, affecting millions of people worldwide, while acknowledging and paying homage to the history of activists who worked, and continue to work towards its eradication.

The film begins with a beautiful portrait of Katrina Haslip, an early activist in the epidemic, who found out she was HIV positive while incarcerated and started organizing for the rights of positive inmates. At the time, the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) had a limited definition of HIV that did not include symptoms particular to women's bodies, such as yeast infections. This meant women were systemically denied treatment. Haslip was part of a group that worked to change the definition, so that women were able to receive services.

Haslip sets the tone for the rest of the movie. We meet women in Burundi, Nigeria, New York and New Orleans who are trailblazers in their own communities, they reveal their personal stories and locate the specific structural barriers they face in accessing medication, health care, education and support.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – April 28, 2018 (2 of 2)

This film is as diligent in carving the history of a movement as it is in taking the time to honour each woman's story. Harriet Hirshorn, herself a long-time activist, masterfully weaves together a choir of voices while maintaining a clear and distinct narrative and call to action. Her blending of archival footage with present-day interviews memorializes the foremothers of a movement while anchoring the story in contemporary society. As Nigerian activist Morolake Odetoyinbo succinctly says "it's not just about getting access to medicines, it's about policies that make it worth being a woman. It's about policies that protect the lives of women, that invest in the health of women, that invest in the education of women, that supports and provides services." There are some movies that leave you speechless, this one left me screaming: Beautiful! Impassioned! Inspiring! Necessary! Break the silence. See this film.

Nothing without Us screens:

-Mon, Apr. 30 at 1:15 PM at Scotiabank

-Sun, May 6 at 9:00 PM at Scotiabank

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Hot Docs Review: 'The Accountant of Auschwitz' Shows That Past Sins and Crimes Against Humanity Should Never Go Unpunished

APRIL 28, 2018 BRITANY MURPHY



The trial of the "Accountant of Auschwitz," Oskar Gröning, began in 2015 and made headlines around the world. At the age of 94, Gröning would stand trial for war crimes that he committed during World War II while he was a member of the SS at Auschwitz. The documentary is an in-depth look at what happened, not only during the trial of Gröning, but other high-profile cases against Nazi soldiers after the end of World War II.

Directed by Matthew Shoychet, ***The Accountant of Auschwitz*** shows the pain and horror endured by Holocaust survivors, as they confront one of the men who had a hand in the killing of thousands of their friends and families, while also delving into how moral complicity makes one just as guilty as any of the guards who pulled the trigger. Shoychet perfectly reminds the audience of the importance that justice needs to always be served, despite the age or circumstances surrounding the accused in question.

With testimonies from survivors, historians and Gröning himself, ***The Accountant of Auschwitz*** proves that "never again" is impossible and a cycle that is doomed to repeat itself if those who've played a part in atrocities like the Holocaust go unpunished.

***The Accountant of Auschwitz* screens Sunday, April 29th, Monday, April 30th and Friday, May 4th at Hot Docs. Its runtime is 1 hr. 18 min.**

<http://www.thereelroundup.com/2018/04/the-accountant-of-auschwitz-hot-docs-review.html>

The Accountant of Auschwitz doc looks at prosecution of aging Nazi guards

By **VICTORIA AHEARN**The Canadian Press
Sat., April 28, 2018



Former SS sergeant Oskar Groening at his 2015 trial in Lueneburg, northern Germany. He died last month before serving his prison sentence. (TOBIAS SCHWARZ / CP/AP FILE PHOTO)

As a German Nazi SS officer during the Second World War, Oskar Groening worked as an accountant at the Auschwitz concentration camp in occupied Poland.

He documented and evaluated the worth of all the valuables of the prisoners as they arrived off the trains.

Former SS sergeant Oskar Groening at his 2015 trial in Lueneburg, northern Germany. He died last month before serving his prison sentence. (TOBIAS SCHWARZ / CP/AP FILE PHOTO)

But he didn't kill anyone nor sign orders to kill, according to his testimony at a high-profile 2015 trial, in which he was convicted as an accessory to the murder of 300,000 Jews.

The new documentary *The Accountant of Auschwitz* explores Groening's case — looking at the complicity of him and other lower-level SS guards, and the debates surrounding their prosecution in the 1990s.

"The reason why he was on trial is because they could prove that he was on the ramp where the selections took place: this person goes to the gas chamber, this person goes to work," said Matthew Shoychet, the doc's Toronto-based director.

"He was right there when the genocide was taking place, so just him being there makes him complicit."

Toronto Star – April 28, 2018 (2 of 3)

Debuting Sunday at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, *The Accountant of Auschwitz* comes shortly after Groening's death last month at age 96. He had yet to start his four-year prison sentence, which he was appealing.

As Shoychet explains, Groening grew up in a nationalist family. After the war, he worked as a bookkeeper while living in his hometown in Germany.

He wasn't on the radar of prosecutors until 2005, when he did an interview with the BBC and candidly talked about his experiences at Auschwitz.

That led to his trial, in which Holocaust survivors including Bill Glied of Toronto testified.

Glied speaks in the doc, along with other survivors and a variety of academics, lawyers and journalists.

Also in the doc is Benjamin Ferencz, a U.S. prosecutor at the post-war Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders.

Ricki Gurwitz, one of the doc's producers, said she came up with the idea for the film after doing a segment on Groening's trial while working as a TV news reporter.

"One of the reasons we wanted to make this film is because the German judicial system, after the war, really did not prosecute Nazis," said Gurwitz.

"Their record is terrible. Out of the 6,500 SS guards at Auschwitz, only 49 were ever prosecuted ... In 2009 the interpretation of the law changed, so that meant that anyone who was just there could be prosecuted. That led prosecutors to (Groening)."

The filmmakers said Groening wouldn't do an interview with them for the doc, which does feature footage of him at his trial.

The film also looks at other Nazi war crimes trials, including that of John Demjanjuk.

"One of the questions, the central themes in our film, is Germany trying to make up for the mistakes of its past by prosecuting these lower-level SS guards who are 94, 95, today," said Gurwitz.

"How complicit are they? They didn't shoot anyone, they were just there. They helped the system run but they weren't actually killing anyone. All their contemporaries have died, all their superiors who actually did the killing died.

"They're the last men who are able to stand trial. Should they be facing prosecution because they're the last men left standing? Or are they actually complicit because they were a cog in the machine and the machine would not have run without them there?"

In the film, one of the survivors says she initially had sympathy for Groening when she saw how frail he was in court. But that vanished when she saw a look of disdain on his face.

Toronto Star – April 28, 2018 (3 of 3)

Yet another survivor forgave him and hugged him in court, said Gurwitz.

“It just goes to show that this case is not so cut and dry, it’s not so black and white. There’s a lot of moral ambiguity.”

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/04/28/the-accountant-of-auschwitz-doc-looks-at-prosecution-of-aging-nazi-guards.html>

CP24 – April 29, 2018

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CBC Ici Radio Canada – April 29, 2018 (1 of 2)

Le plus important festival de documentaire en Amérique du Nord célèbre ses 25 ans

Publié le dimanche 29 avril 2018



Photo extraite du film « What Walaa Wants » Photo : « What Walaa Want », film de Christy Garland

Au premier Festival du documentaire Hot Docs en 1994, seulement 21 films étaient présentés. 25 ans plus tard, il s'agit maintenant du plus gros évènement du genre en Amérique du Nord et du second en importance à l'international, après le Festival international de film documentaire d'Amsterdam (IDFA), aux Pays-Bas.

Un texte de **Claudia Hébert**

Cette année, plus de 215 000 spectateurs sont attendus dans les salles de cinéma de la Ville Reine pour découvrir la programmation 2018 de l'évènement. Il s'agit d'une des rares programmations à être paritaire : elle compte autant d'œuvres de cinéastes hommes que femmes.

Cette année, 3059 films ont été soumis au Festival, et 246 ont été choisis.

C'est le genre de festival qui peut mettre un cinéaste sur la carte. D'avoir dans sa filmographie que le film a été sélectionné à Hot Docs, ça contribue à faire rayonner l'œuvre.

Michèle Bélanger, directrice exécutive de la programmation et production au programme français de l'ONF

En 2015, le festival estimait les retombées économiques de l'ensemble des activités de Hot Docs tout au long de l'année à 33,3 millions de dollars en Ontario, ce qui comprenait les activités annuelles du cinéma Hot Docs Ted Rogers. Le cinéma de 650 places est le plus grand au monde à être consacré au documentaire.

CBC Ici Radio Canada – April 29, 2018 (2 of 2)

Hot Docs ne fait pas que de présenter des films alors qu'un important volet de l'évènement est consacré à l'industrie. Sessions de *pitch*, conférences, ateliers, activités de réseautage : pour plusieurs cinéastes, c'est l'occasion de chercher du financement, de se trouver des partenaires et de vendre des oeuvres à l'international.

Plus de 2500 cinéastes, producteurs, distributeurs et diffuseurs de partout dans le monde sont attendus au festival cette année.

C'est le grand carrefour nord-américain pour le documentaire.

Michèle Bélanger, directrice exécutive de la programmation et production au programme français de l'ONF

Le directeur du festival, Brett Hendrie, explique que pour beaucoup de festivaliers, c'est le moment de prendre le pouls du monde : « Les cycles de nouvelles et les sujets de conversation de l'heure sont reflétés dans le travail des cinéastes. Vous remarquerez cette année notre programme dédié à celles qui ont brisé le silence (*Silence Breakers*). Plusieurs films explorent également les médias sociaux, les fausses nouvelles et leur impact sur la démocratie ».

Le festival offre d'ailleurs des projections gratuites pendant la journée pour les étudiants et les personnes de plus de 60 ans. De plus, certains cinéastes sont présents aux projections et sont ouverts à la discussion sur les sujets abordés.

Hot Docs se poursuit jusqu'au 6 mai à Toronto.

'Eternity Never Surrendered' Takes Top Spot in Hot Docs Audience Award Race

Posted on April 29th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



By Pat Mullen

Here's a shocker! Mr. Rogers doc *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* didn't take the top spot in the latest update for the Hot Docs Audience Award race. Morgan Neville's film still sits at a respectable 4th place. It's important to remember that voting only has a 12-hour window. (I tried to vote for it at 7:30am this morning and missed my chance.) Vote before going to bed! However, the doc in the top spot is sleeper hit *Eternity Never Surrendered* by Mexican director Daniela Rea Gómez. The film about loss, violence, and grief screens again today at 3:30 PM. Yesterday's #1, *Exit Music*, drops to #5.

On the Canadian front, *Transformer* continues to hold steady at the top of the pack with NFB doc *First Stripes* entering the race at #6.

The top 20 docs in the race for the Audience Awards are:

1. Eternity Never Surrendered
2. Transformer
3. Gurrumul
4. Won't You Be My Neighbor?
5. Exit Music
6. First Stripes
7. Global Family
8. The Game Changers
9. Letter from Masanjia
10. The Silence of Others

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11. McQueen
12. Don't Be Nice
13. Warrior Women
14. People's Republic of Desire
15. Three Identical Strangers
16. The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret
17. I, Dolours
18. Mr. SOUL!
19. United Skates
20. Dreaming Murakami

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/blog/view/eternity-surrendered-takes-top-spot-in-hot-docs-audience-award-race>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Elizabeth Mirzaei — “Laila at the Bridge”

BY Laura Berger April 29, 2018

Elizabeth Mirzaei served as director and cinematographer on the BBC's “The Killing of Farkhunda,” which was nominated for a Royal Television Society Award, and a cinematographer on the Emmy-nominated “What Tomorrow Brings.” Her short films have been shown before world leaders at the Oslo Conference on Women's Rights.

“Laila at the Bridge” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival on April 30. The film is co-directed by Gulistan Mirzaei.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

EM: Laila Haidari is known as the “mother of the addicts” in Kabul. She survived child marriage and her own traumatic past to battle one of the deadliest problems in Afghanistan: heroin addiction. This film follows Laila, as well as several men and women trying to recover from addiction, over a period of three years.

It's a deeply personal perspective on the global addiction epidemic, following the labor of love of one woman fighting to keep her center alive in the face of physical threats, governmental opposition, and the departure of the international community from Afghanistan.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

EM: I had been living in Kabul with my husband, Gulistan, when we heard about this incredible woman who was single-handedly providing treatment to thousands of people addicted to heroin. The story resonated with me on a personal level. Before I was born, my mom was the sole female psychologist in a revolutionary new heroin addiction treatment center. It was surreal to see my mom featured in these old newspaper clippings, one woman in a room full of men who much of society likely deemed to be lost causes. This stuck with me, and is part of the reason I was so drawn to Laila.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

EM: I'd like audiences to feel like they've walked a little in Laila's shoes and have a greater understanding of the beauty, tragedy, and complexity in Afghanistan, a country whose fate much of the world is collectively responsible for.

By showing the story of this truly badass and strong woman, I also hope that it dispels the stereotype of the victimized Afghan or Muslim woman. The fact that Laila hasn't given up in the face of tremendous obstacles will hopefully inspire us all to do the same when faced with our own challenges, wherever we are in the world.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

EM: I think all films have their challenges, and certainly “Laila at the Bridge” was full of them. From facing threats and being followed, to struggling to self-finance three years of filming, to shipping drives out of Afghanistan and losing some footage along the way, we wondered how we were ever going to finish this film!

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

EM: We self-funded the three years of shooting in Kabul by taking every job we were offered. We were grateful to receive the support of the IDFA Bertha Fund for post production in 2014,

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and then did a crowd funding campaign in 2015. In 2016, we were fortunate to meet our talented producer, Ina Fichman, who moved the film forward and also obtained funding from Canada. We were awarded the Gucci-Tribeca Documentary Fund in 2017 and another grant from the Bertha Foundation, and a number of excellent broadcasters—NHK, IKON, SVT, and DR—came on board.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

EM: I was thrilled to find out that “Laila at the Bridge” would have its North American premiere at Hot Docs. While I’ve never been to the festival before, I’d heard so many great things about it. I’m also excited that Laila herself will be coming to Hot Docs!

W&H: What’s the best and worst advice you’ve received?

EM: I’ve received a lot of good advice over the years, but one particular piece comes to mind right now. I was dealing with a number of particularly challenging situations when I lived in Kabul, and a beautiful African nun there told me to “take courage.”

The fact that she used the word “take” as opposed to “have” really stuck with me. In times of struggle, including the inevitable struggle I face with every film, it helps to remind myself that I already have the strength and courage inside of me and I just need to harness it.

The worst advice I received was probably from a colleague who said, “You can’t have a baby—you’re in the middle of your documentary!” At the time, I almost believed it and allowed a man to dictate to me what was and wasn’t possible for me as a female filmmaker. I’m so glad I didn’t listen to that.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

EM: Be persistent. It may often feel like you will never finish your film, and you will likely face some rejection and naysayers, but stay true to your vision for the film to the end.

I’m also a big advocate of having mentors. I’m grateful to have been mentored by a wonderful female director who was both extremely honest and encouraging.

If you happen to become a mother and have an actual baby while you’re simultaneously trying to get your other “baby” off the ground, don’t listen to the naysayers. You can do it.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

EM: That’s a tough question, because there are so many brilliant women-directed films. At the moment, it’s Hanna Pollak’s “Something Better to Come,” which follows a girl growing up in a garbage dump outside Moscow over a 14-year period.

While it may sound utterly bleak, Pollak manages to weave in moments of joy and ultimately craft an honest but hopeful film.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

EM: We’re at a unique moment in time. I hope that all those who have been abused will find the courage to talk about it, and those who have perpetrated abuse on others will have the humility to admit it and, if they’re in a position of power, step down. Women should not be systematically excluded from having a place at the table in the film business.

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As I have experienced sexual assault myself, I'm thankful that #TimesUp and #MeToo have helped women feel more empowered to speak up about sexual abuse, and that the fight for gender parity has come to the forefront.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-elizabeth-mirzaei-laila-at-the-bridge-79e70850b82c/?gi=f69be49a489e>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Cynthia Wade and Sasha Friedlander — “Grit”

BY Beandrea July April 29, 2018

Cynthia Wade’s 2008 documentary “Freeheld” won an Academy Award, Special Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, and 13 other awards. Her other credits include “Grist for the Mill,” “Shelter Dogs,” and “Generation Startup.”

Sasha Friedlander’s feature-length documentary “Where Heaven Meets Hell” won Best Feature Documentary Film at the LA Asian Pacific Film Festival and Hawaii International Film Festival. The film aired on PBS.

“Grit” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 30.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

CW&SF: When Dian was six, a tsunami of mud barreled towards her. Sixteen villages were instantly plunged under 60 feet of mud. The cause? A drilling company struck an underground pocket of mud and unleashed an unstoppable mudflow—a giant, sprawling disaster in Indonesia that continues over a decade later.

“Grit” chronicles Dian’s emerging activism as she joins the fight against the drilling company.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

CW: I was in Indonesia in 2012 and someone there said to me, “If you want to consider a new topic for a documentary, you should look into the mudflow.” I’d never heard of the disaster before. I visited the mud site for three days and conducted initial interviews on film, and gathered enough material to make a three-minute film teaser.

SF: It took a year to put the crew in place, and to find my co-director Sasha Friedlander, who grew up partially in Indonesia, worked as a journalist there, and is fluent in Bahasa. Then it was another five years of fundraising and production. We worked with both an Indonesian and U.S. crew.

I lived in Indonesia between 2007 and 2009, working for the Bali Post as a journalist and translator. During that time I’d covered the devastating story of the Lapindo mudflow in East Java and I remember feeling moved and inspired by the protests mounting against the gas drilling company. Because the owner of that company was a key political figure in Indonesia, the government heavily censored the stories that were coming out in the news, so the coverage never left the archipelago.

When I received an email from Cynthia in May 2013 about the possibility of collaborating on a film about the mudflow, it was the first time I’d heard the story mentioned since I left Indonesia in 2009. I knew that there was a presidential election coming up in 2014, which offered a glimmer of hope for the mudflow victims who were still waiting for their reparations from the drilling company.

I was excited to get back to Indonesia and learn more about the situation through the lens of the activists. There was a sense of optimism in the air that reminded me of the pre-Obama enthusiasm leading up to the 2008 US election. Cynthia and I hoped to make a film that would resonate with a Western audience. During the six years that we were filming “Grit,” we could

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never have imagined how many parallels would emerge between this story in East Java and the political upheavals here in the U.S.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

CW&SF: Our hope is that audiences will leave the theater with a better understanding of the world's largest Muslim country. We want people to think about the urgency for political engagement, the importance of women in leadership roles, and the power of art and perseverance in social and environmental struggles. It's hopeful that we're seeing young people stepping up and demanding change worldwide.

After watching this story unfold, we hope audiences are inspired to cultivate their own determination, their own grit.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

CW&SF: The biggest challenge by far was the distance. Because the funding was slow and piecemeal, it was very difficult to cover the story from afar and make quick decisions to travel across the world to film something that might or might not be critical to the story.

Another huge challenge was gaining the trust of the community where we were filming. The people directly affected had lost everything, and we came in six years after the initial disaster took place. Many local news crews had come in and had made promises to the victims that were never met. Sasha is fortunate to speak Indonesian, so through many conversations and over the course of six years we were able to develop relationships based on trust and shared values.

During the editing process, it was especially difficult to figure out how to communicate the complexity of Indonesian politics and history without using formal narration or cards.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

CW&SF: We wrote a lot of grant proposals over the course of six years. The film was supported by Teach Green Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Fork Films, Sundance Institute, Catapult Film Fund, Chicken & Egg Pictures, LEF Foundation, Our Children's Earth Foundation, the Women in Film Finishing Fund, and other funders.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

CW&SF: It was a turning point for us to pitch the film at the 2016 Hot Docs Film Forum. That pitch led us the Sundance Edit Lab, which was crucial for our editing process.

CW: Toronto has meaning for me. I produced a fiction adaptation of my short documentary "Freeheld" and that feature film had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2015. It's great to return to the city to attend the Hot Docs festival.

SF: I screened my first feature documentary "Where Heaven Meets Hell" at Hot Docs in 2012, so it's really special to get to return to Toronto to share a completely different story with the fabulous audiences there.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

CW: Best advice: "Find your voice and don't be ashamed of it."

Worst advice: "That film can never be made" and "that film has no audience." Often a filmmaker can see where she is going and the people around her can't see it yet. Just because someone can't see your vision does not mean you don't have a vision.

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SF: Best advice: To maintain the connections you make around the world, because they could be the people who lead you to your best characters when making a film. This advice has proven true time and time again.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

CW: Every film has its own path, so what works for one film almost never works for the next film. When there are setbacks and disappointments, it's helpful to remind myself that my focus is bigger picture—I am creating a body of my work over the course of my career. Thinking bigger can sometimes help you get through any challenge of the moment.

SF: Don't ever back away from a subject matter or a filmmaking situation because you think that being female won't get you access or respect.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

CW: "Pariah" by Dee Rees and "The Hurt Locker" by Kathryn Bigelow. Both films are razor sharp, gutsy, and full of heat.

SF: "The Oath," directed by Laura Poitras. When I watched it during graduate school, I was blown away by the access that she had earned in a very male dominant world. Poitras' film gave me the confidence to set out and make my own first feature documentary, which was set in an environment completely dominated by men.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

CW: I would love to walk on a set of a commercial I'm directing and not have one of the male crew say to me, "And you are?" In the past 16 months, this has happened on three different sets. The question came from just one person on each of those sets, a dude who never bothered to read the call sheet. Seriously—read a call sheet before you show up. And read the room when you get there.

SF: Every female I know in the industry has a story and can relate to what's been unearthed in the past year with the #TimesUp movement. The moment has arrived, and the men in the industry can do their part to help change what is and has always been a sexist industry. We women need to stand strong together.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Elan Bogarín — “306 Hollywood”

BY Sophie Willard April 29, 2018

Elan Bogarín was nominated for at the 2009 Gotham and Spirit Awards for producing “Big Fan.” She co-founded The Wassaic Project, an arts festival/residency program that has hosted thousands of artists. Bogarín and her brother Jonathan are the co-directors of El Tigre Productions, a bilingual digital strategy/production company that creates innovative non-fiction films and content for the world’s leading museums and cultural institutions.

“306 Hollywood” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on April 30. The film is co-directed by Jonathan Bogarín.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

EB: When siblings Elan and Jonathan Bogarín lose their grandma, they face a profound question: when a loved one dies, what do we do with everything they left behind? Turning documentary on its head, the Bogaríns embark on a magical-realist journey that transforms Grandma’s cluttered New Jersey home into a visually exquisite ruin where tchotchkes become artifacts, and the siblings become archaeologists.

With help from physicists, curators, and archivists, they excavate the extraordinary universe contained in a family home.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

EB: My brother Jonathan and I are inspired by the magic of real life, and our goal was to create a documentary whose very form embodies the vividness, complexity, and humanity of ordinary experience. In “306 Hollywood,” we travel to the most ordinary of all places—the home—and find that instead of drab curtains, you’ve entered a universe.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

EB: Everyone will lose a loved one but most often our grief goes unspoken. More than sex or religion, grief is generally taboo. Our modern society lacks rituals and resources to cope with the complex nature of loss. But what happens when we treat grief not as something to be “gotten through, but rather a strange landscape where we re-learn the world”? I’m quoting Meghan Rourke and her book “The Long Goodbye” here. It was a real inspiration.

Our film is about the stories we leave behind—the crazy, personal, funny, thought-provoking stories we tell each other. I hope that our film sparks viewers to think about their own families and lives. What stories do they remember? What did they learn?

We’re looking to share other people’s stories—simple photos with a caption. For example, one viewer sent a picture and amazing story of their Grandmother’s 1960s vibrator! Another sent a photo of a ring that her whole family spent 20 years fighting over. Reach out!

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

EB: The biggest challenge was convincing financiers, and the community, that we could and should make a non-traditional documentary without an easy to define call-to-action or standard form. Certainly, no one gave us permission. We had to have an almost finished film before the community started to believe that what we were pitching was in fact possible.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

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EB: For most of the years we were working on the film, my brother and I were outside of the industry. As I mentioned earlier, no one wanted to put seed money into the project, so we made the choice to form our film production and digital strategy company, El Tigre Productions. Our company served as a funding source for our film, and a training ground for our skills, and I'm proud to say that our clients include some of the world's leading museums. But our path changed entirely when we first participated in the IFP Labs, and then we were chosen for the Hot Docs Forum where we pitched our film to the documentary community. That experience was like a magic trick.

We began our pitch for "306 Hollywood" as unknowns but after the pitch, we had meetings with every major industry professional, and better yet, had received funding from the most amazing, down-to-earth, and inspiring investor group, Chicago Media Project. Their partnership allowed us to finish the film and really changed our lives.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

EB: Playing at Hot Docs is extremely meaningful because it is where everything changed for us.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

EB: Not best or worst, just advice: Don't wait for permission to tell the stories you want to tell. Find the way. But don't ruin your life while you're at it. Don't let your filmmaking allow you to go broke. Take vacations. Try to have some fun.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

EB: As a female director, I struggled a lot with self confidence. For years I was desperately embarrassed that it took me so long to finish my first feature to the point where I stopped admitting that I was even making a film, let alone wanted to direct. During that time, the central drama in my life was wanting—needing—to finish my feature, and I felt ridiculous that this caused me such angst, and that I had let it affect my professional, financial, and personal life. For a while I termed my struggle "my crazy niche problem."

Making a movie is not reinventing the wheel. Others have come before you, and traveled the path. Seek out mentorship. Don't struggle by yourself. Who knows why we're driven to do this but we are! Ask for help!

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

EB: Agnès Varda's "The Beaches of Agnès." She is the master of the personal and the poetic! She mixes together subject matters that don't obviously go together! The documentary stems from art not journalism! She doesn't play by the rules! She goes for it! What a character.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

EB: #MeToo #TimesUp

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-elan-bogar%C3%ADn-306-hollywood-c61aac215ecc/?gi=d84b23bdf321>

This week in Toronto: A filmmaking legend at Hot Docs, a music legend at Massey Hall, a comedy legend on Netflix

Sun., April 29, 2018

MONDAY

James Cameron's Story of Science Fiction

Watch this if: You want to explore one of entertainment's most popular genres with the man who made *Titanic* and *Avatar*.

If you love movies and particularly sci-fi ones, there's plenty of eye and ear candy in this six-part docuseries, hosted by the Canadian filmmaker who made the two top-grossing movies of all time. Not surprisingly, Cameron commands an A-list of directors, actors, authors and others as interview subjects. The premiere, which focuses on how pop culture portrays alien life, includes guests like Steven Spielberg, George Lucas and Ridley Scott, and revisits movies like *E.T.*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Independence Day*, *Alien*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Arrival* and, of course, *Avatar*. (AMC at 10 p.m.)

—Debra Yeo

TUESDAY

A Taste of Empire

Watch this if: You've got an appetite for theatre.

What is one thing that instantly makes any event even better? Food. So check out *A Taste of Empire*, a Rice & Beans Theatre production presented by Cahoots Theatre, especially if you have a craving for the Filipino dish *rellenong bangus*. Actor Derek Chan will make the dish as he performs the script, written by director Jovanni Sy, revealing less-than-palatable truths about the

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colonial histories behind the ingredients. It's in Cantonese with surtitles in English and simplified Chinese. (Factory Theatre, 125 Bathurst St., 8 p.m., on until May 6)

—*Carly Maga*

WEDNESDAY

Elvis & The Man in Black

Watch this if: You want old-fashioned rock 'n' roll fused with contemporary dance.

In 2014, Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie presented a double bill about two iconic men of music: Elvis Presley, channelled through Laurence Lemieux's choreography for five men and two women to a mix of song and interview segments; and Johnny Cash, represented in James Kudelka's acclaimed piece for three men and one woman performed in cowboy boots. Both pieces are a larger reflection on the legacies of musicians whose work represent more than the men in question. On the heels of International Dance Day, they're being remounted by Citadel + Compagnie in a limited run. (The Citadel, 304 Parliament St., 8 p.m., on until May 12)

—*CM*

THURSDAY

Promise at Dawn at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival

Watch this if: You want to add some literary flair to your film fest-going.

The opening night film for the 26th annual TJFF is a handsome drama about the early years of one of France's literary giants, Romain Gary. Pierre Niney stars in this portrait of the writer as a young student and pilot in the Second World War. A Skype Q&A with director Eric Barbier follows the screening, which launches a busy slate of features, docs and other events, including special tributes to fine folks like writer Morley Torgov, actors Paul Soles and Harvey Atkin, and

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Barney Miller himself, Hal Linden. The TJFF runs to May 13. (Cineplex Odeon Varsity and VIP Cinemas, 55 Bloor St. W., 7 p.m.)

—*Jason Anderson*

Opera Pub

Watch this if: You want a mix between a pub night, an open mic and an evening at the opera.

Placing opera inside a bar put Against the Grain Theatre on the artistic map of Toronto and, since then, the company has grown into an operatic force in Canada. Yet even while creating new works for the Banff Centre and Harbourfront Centre Theatre, where its *Orphée* just closed, Against the Grain has maintained its monthly opera pub night. The final one of the season offers patrons one more chance to have a pint alongside some of the city's best singers. (Amsterdam Bicycle Club, 54 The Esplanade, 9 p.m.)

—*CM*

FRIDAY

Barbara Kopple's Harlan County, USA

Watch this if: You want to see proof there's power in a union.

Still one of the most powerful films ever made about the struggle for workers' rights, *Harlan County, USA* established Barbara Kopple as a master of the documentary form over 40 years ago. As part of its retrospective on Kopple – this year's recipient of the festival's Outstanding Achievement Award – Hot Docs presents a rare screening of her 1976 Oscar winner, along with an extended conversation with the director and one of her subjects, Bernie Aronson, and a special performance of music from the film by Appalachian musician Jack Morris. (TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St. W., 1:15 p.m.)

—JA

A Little Help With Carol Burnett

Watch this if: You'd like some more time together with a TV legend.

Take an 85-year-old comedy icon, add 5- to 9-year-old children for her to interact with and Netflix is hoping it equals a hit. Carol Burnett, whose eponymous sketch comedy show made her a household name between 1967 and 1978, stars in this 12-episode series in which she, co-host Russell Peters and celebrity guests seek advice from a panel of kids. Based on the trailers out there, it's clear the children don't hesitate to speak their minds with predictably funny results. Everyone from DJ Khaled to *Stranger Things*' Finn Wolfhard joins Burnett on the couch. (Netflix)

—DY

SATURDAY

Bruce Cockburn

Watch this to: Catch up with one of the country's newest singer-songwriter Hall of Famers.

That's right, the soon to be 73-year-old Cockburn has another honorific in a lengthy list with last fall's induction into the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. Coincidentally or not, that meant a miss locally for Cockburn's full-band tour, built around *Bone on Bone*, his first record in seven years. The record's as full of expert fretwork as anyone familiar with his body of work can expect, but it's that 33 album-strong catalogue that's the attraction any time he stops by. Cockburn may be a little mellower with age, but he's still capable of kicking up a righteous storm with the help of his three touring bandmates and friends: Gary Craig (drums), John Dymond (bass) and nephew John Aaron Cockburn (accordion). (Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St., 8 p.m.)

—Chris Young

Jorja Smith

Watch this for: A new voice that's gone from viral to blowing up big.

A packed Velvet Underground went nuts when Drake himself came onstage to give Smith a gushing endorsement and join in a duet of their “Get It Together” during her local debut last summer. It's indicative of the kind of company she's been keeping, including a pair of guest spots on Drizzy's *More Life* mixtape, plus a slew of awards, accolades and comparisons to assured individualists like Amy Winehouse and Sade. At 20 years old, she's barely started, with a first LP on the way, and you know she won't be playing these kind of clubs for much longer. Ama Lou, an even younger compatriot, gets the opening slot and who knows, maybe there will be a Drake reprise. (Opera House, 735 Queen St. E., doors 7 p.m., also playing Sunday)

—CY

Russia's role in Donald Trump's election is the subject of two Hot Docs films

By **BRUCE DEMARA** Entertainment Reporter
Sun., April 29, 2018

Still on the fence about whether Russian interference in the 2016 election led to the election of U.S. President Donald Trump? Two films at the Hot Docs Festival, coming from different perspectives and with vastly different tones, should put your doubts to rest.

Active Measures takes a solid, investigative documentary approach, quoting impeccable on-the-record experts as well as losing Democratic standard bearer Hillary Clinton and Republican Senator John McCain, and providing valuable historical context.



An image from Russian TV of President Vladimir Putin with U.S. President Donald Trump, part of the documentary *Our New President*. (COURTESY HOT DOCS FESTIVAL)

The tone of *Our New President* is a lot less serious — farcical even — as it relies entirely on “found footage” detailing Russian efforts to influence the U.S. campaign through its state-controlled media and other means, while looking at the ridiculously amateurish ways ordinary Russians, via YouTube, have chosen to celebrate Trump’s victory.

Maxim Pozdorovkin, a Russian émigré, said the idea for the film and its ironic title came as a result of a visit home by co-editor Matvey Kulakov.

“About two weeks after the election, (Kulakov) came back from visiting his mother in Moscow and, at this point, the whole Russian story was just a very, very faint whisper ... and he goes, ‘Everyone in Moscow is very excited about Trump, they keep on calling him our new president, our new president,’” Pozdorovkin recalled.

Active Measures takes its name from a real program by Russian intelligence agencies and the state-controlled media, detailing Russia’s long, successful history of bullying its enemies using all the underhanded tools of propaganda and the internet. A massive nationwide cyberattack on neighbouring Estonia, the film notes, took place on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s birthday while Ukraine and Georgia have felt Russia’s wrath in even more sinister ways.

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Director Jack Bryan said he and his team began working on the film in April 2017, when evidence of the Russian interference in the presidential election became insurmountable, a view shared even earlier and unanimously among the U.S. intelligence community.

"It really was just about, let's get down to the facts. For me, I felt that we don't need to exaggerate ... the reality is the most disturbing part of it, so all we have to do is figure it out and then just go to the people who know the most about these things and say, 'What happened?' And the answers they gave us back, we couldn't have made up anything that disturbing," Bryan said.

"I think, as we kept going though, the thing that we found and the thing that got us out of bed every morning was just how fragile democracies are and that this was a worldwide problem. That really became the thing that we tried to shine the light the most is this isn't about a president, this isn't about an election, this is about our worldwide democratic process."

For Pozdorovkin, who earned his PhD studying early Soviet propaganda, the film was an interesting challenge.

"We all know what fake news is, what propaganda is and that it exists. How do you actually make people feel something about that? And so the film is really kind of relentless in the way it kind of bombards you with this stuff. By the end of the film, everyone is kind of shell-shocked, and feels dirty and wants to take a shower. They're laughing hysterically for the first 45 minutes and then it settles in," he said.

Bryan said he's getting a powerful reaction from audiences.

"It's very unusual, for me anyway, as someone who's been making independent films for 10 years. I'm not used to leaving a screening and someone grabbing me and saying, 'Everybody needs to see this.' It feels nice, but it also feels real; it feels like a responsibility," he said.

Despite the rapturous reception his film is getting at film festivals, Pozdorovkin may have a different dilemma.

"It almost feels like we've hit a hornet's nest where you can make fun of Trump but actually talking about what happened (in the election) in a sort of a satirical way is just too uncomfortable. So distributors love the film, but they're almost terrified of it; it's too risky," he said.

Active Measures will screen at Hot Docs on April 30 at 9 p.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre, May 2 at 3:45 p.m. and May 4 at 6:15 p.m. at the TIFF Bell Lightbox 1. Our New President will screen at Hot Docs on May 1 at 9 p.m. at Scotiabank Theatre 4, May 3 at 10 a.m. and May 5 at 12:45 p.m. at the TIFF Bell Lightbox 1.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/04/29/russias-role-in-donald-trumps-election-is-the-subject-of-two-hot-docs-films.html>

'Our islands will be under water': One small nation's fight against climate change

Anote's Ark, a documentary about the island republic of Kiribati, playing at Hot Docs festival in Toronto

CBC Radio · April 30



Kiribati consists of a chain of 33 atolls and islands that stand just metres above sea level, spread over a huge expanse of otherwise empty ocean. (David Gray/Reuters)

comments

Listen 27:20

What can one man do when the ocean threatens to swallow his home?

That's the question at the heart of the documentary *Anote's Ark*, which will have its Canadian premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs Festival on Tuesday.

The "ark" in the film is the island republic of Kiribati, and "Anote" is Kiribati's former president Anote Tong, who is on a mission to tell the world about his country on the front lines of the devastating effects of climate change.

Tong and the Canadian director Matthieu Rytz joined *As It Happens* host Carol Off in studio to discuss the documentary.

Here is part of their conversation.

President Tong, I just want to ask you, first of all, if you can tell us a bit about Kiribati, because the documentary is very disturbing, very troubling. But it's also very beautiful, because your country, your nation, is so beautiful.

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 30, 2018 (2 of 5)

It is a beautiful country. It is right in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on the equator, and also straddling the international dateline.

They're all mostly coral atolls. Of course, coral atolls are just bits of coral on top of the seamounts. And so the elevation is, on average, about two metres above sea level and, therefore, not very resilient to any kind of a storm.

With the rising sea level, the level of vulnerability is extreme.

I think we argue that case every time we go to the United Nations to discuss about least developed country status. Even if we do achieve some development, all of this could be cancelled out whenever there is a bit of an adverse condition.



Former Kiribati president Anote Tong discusses his campaign to save the low-lying Pacific nation from global warming, the subject of Canadian filmmaker Matthieu Rytz's documentary Anote's Ark. (Angela Weiss/AFP/Getty Images)

Matthieu Rytz, why did you want to make this documentary?

I started as a photojournalist covering the global issue of the rising sea. And really, why I wanted to start this whole project is when I first met with president Tong in Kirabati.

I met an incredible man, at that time, four years ago. Very charming, but with a mission that blew my mind.

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 30, 2018 (3 of 5)

As a head of state, knowing that you will be stateless within the century — I was like, what's the biggest journey? What's the biggest challenge? You don't have something bigger as the head of state than losing the state.

President Tong, you travel the world trying to explain what's going on, trying to get people interested, and to care. You go the United Nations. You meet the Pope. You keep trying to make your case. What is it that you are asking them to do?

The focus of the climate debate has in the past been on the science — whether this was human-induced or whether it's part of the normal cycle. And that took some time to resolve.

But by 2007, with the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, it was fairly conclusive that it was human-induced.

And so, they came up with scenarios, which for me, were extremely disastrous for our people.

Climate change is not so much about the science. It's not so much about the environment. It's not about the economies.

For me, it's always been about people and that's the point I've always wanted to make — to bring in the human dimension of the challenge of climate change.

Because a lot of countries believe that it's not relevant, it's not imminent for them, that it doesn't matter. They can still survive. And, to a large extent, there is still that thinking.



A boy stands on top of a seawall in the central Pacific island nation of Kiribati. (David Gray/Reuters)

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 30, 2018 (4 of 5)

And when you think of how they actually describe it, no one hides it. They talk about climate change "winners and losers."

What I've been asking is, "Here we are, loser. But are you going to allow it to happen?"

And this is why I've always said climate change is the greatest moral challenge for humanity.

Because if you know the action — what you do actually results in the demise of a people on the other side of the world — what are you going to do about it? Are you going to keep going on doing it? Or do you have the moral capacity to refrain from doing it?

That question and that challenge remains.

Our islands will be under water unless, of course, we undertake very serious adaptation measures, for which there are no resources forthcoming, even at this point in time.



As It Happens host Carol Off in studio with Tong and Rytz. (CBC)

Your own family, your own children, grandchildren, it must be so disturbing to know, and as you point out in the film, not just that you are going to lose this place, quite possibly. But how much else you lose. You're an Indigenous people. You lose the entire culture.

I can tell you it's not a nice feeling.

I have more than a dozen grandchildren and I do watch them play.

I ask myself the question, "Where will they be?"

CBC Radio (As It Happens) – April 30, 2018 (5 of 5)

I discuss it with my wife. I say, "Where will these kids be when all of this comes down?"

This is why I know there is a certain sense of thinking that maybe God will provide. Let God provide, but we need to do as much as possible in order to allow that to happen.

There are things we can do to give security to our people and this is what I've been saying, coming up with all kinds of radical options.

But in the absence of anything else, why not?

Written by Imogen Birchard and John McGill. Interview produced by Imogen Birchard. Q&A edited for length and clarity.

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-monday-full-episode-1.4641540/our-islands-will-be-under-water-one-small-nation-s-fight-against-climate-change-1.4641542>

CP24 – April 30, 2018

Letter From Masanjia' Screening At Hot Docs

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<https://www.cp24.com/video?clipId=1382868>

Hot Docs '18 honors Ina Fichman with Don Haig Award

By Daniele Alcinii

April 30, 2018



The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival has named Montreal-based producer **Ina Fichman** as the recipient of this year's Don Haig Award.

The honor — now in its 13th year — is presented annually to a Canadian independent producer with a feature documentary competing at the Toronto-set festival. The award, which is selected by a jury of independent producers, recognizes a producer for her or his body of work, creative vision and commitment to mentoring emerging Canadian filmmakers.

Fichman, who is the founder of Intuitive Pictures, will be presented with the award, along with a US\$7,800 (CAD\$10,000) prize, at the Hot Docs Awards Presentation on May 4.

"It is an honor to receive this recognition from my esteemed colleagues and friends from the Canadian documentary community," said Fichman in a statement. "This important acknowledgement of the work of creative documentary producers cannot be underestimated. I raise my glass to my dear producer colleagues who embody the extraordinary passion, generosity and commitment required to produce documentary films."

Over her illustrious 25-year career, Fichman has produced a number of award-winning documentary and fiction films for television and theatrical release, including animated

Realscreen – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

documentary feature *The Wanted 18*; feature doc *Vita Activa: The Spirit of Hannah Arendt*, which won the Best Documentary prize at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival; *Undying Love*; *Being Dorothy*; *Black Coffee*; *S&M: Short and Male*; and *Malls R Us*.

Her forthcoming productions include *Blue Box*, which received the Best Canadian pitch prize at the 2017 Hot Docs Forum; *Inside Lehman Brothers*; *Kyiv-Kozyntyn*; and the virtual reality project *Once Upon A Sea*.

Fichman's Intuitive Pictures has also backed Mor Loushy and Daniel Sivan's *The Oslo Diaries* and Elizabeth Mirzaei and Gulistan Mirzaei's *Laila at the Bridge*, both of which are featured in this year's Hot Docs festival.

As part of the Award, the recipient can name an emerging female documentary filmmaker to receive a \$5,000 cash prize, courtesy of Telefilm Canada, and professional development opportunities at the Hot Docs Festival to further her career path. Fichman has selected Montreal-based producers **Fanny Drew** and **Sarah Mannering** from Colonnelle Films as the recipients of this prize.

Past winners of the Don Haig Award include filmmakers **Daniel Cross** (2017), **Ed Barreveld** (2016), **Anne Pick** (2015), Michael McNamara (2014), Merit Jensen Carr (2013), Mia Donovan (2012), Rama Rau (2011), Philip Lyall and **Nimisha Mukerji** (2010), Brett Gaylor (2009), **Yung Chang** (2008), **Hubert Davis** (2007), and Guylaine Dionne (2006).

With files from Playback's Regan Reid

Netflix, Hot Docs start funding initiative

Netflix is teaming up with Toronto-based film festival Hot Docs for a five-year initiative that will finance under-represented Canadian filmmakers.

Adam Benzine 30-04-2018 ©C21Media



Lisa Nishimura

The Hot Docs Canadian Storytellers Project promises to invest in core funding and professional development programmes for Canadian filmmakers “in recognition of the systemic barriers that continue to exist within the documentary film industry.”

The initiative will aim to serve filmmakers from groups whose stories have been historically under-represented on screen, providing year-round opportunities for documentarians who are indigenous, French-speaking, deaf and/or have a disability, or who are persons of colour.

Hot Docs said it designed the initiative with “extensive and ongoing consultations with a diverse group of arts and culture organisations and individual artists across Canada.”

The partnership will see the establishment of the CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund, which will financially support 25 to 40 independent documentary projects from emerging filmmakers over the next five years, with grants ranging from C\$10,000 (US\$7,700) to C\$50,000.

Both short- and feature-length projects will be supported with development, production or post-production funding. The fund will accept applications for its first round of disbursements this fall.

In addition, Hot Docs and Netflix will support 10 fellowships annually for Hot Docs’ Doc Accelerator programme for emerging filmmakers.

Lisa Nishimura, Netflix’s VP of original documentaries and comedy, said: “This project will promote opportunities for emerging filmmakers, who offer a diversity of perspectives and connect their unique voices to global audiences.”

<http://www.c21media.net/netflix-hot-docs-unite-for-storytellers-project/>

Hot Docs, Netflix partner on Canadian Storytellers Project

The five-year initiative aims to create funding and professional-development opportunities for under-represented documentary filmmakers.

By Jordan Pinto
April 30, 2018

Hot Docs and Netflix have partnered to launch the Hot Docs Canadian Storytellers Project, a new program aimed at creating funding and professional-development opportunities for under-represented documentary filmmakers.

Included within the program is the CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund, which will fund between 25 and 40 filmmakers with grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 over the five years. In a press release announcing the partnership, Hot Docs and Netflix said the Canadian Storytellers Project will serve filmmakers from groups “whose stories have been historically underrepresented on screen,” including storytellers who are Indigenous, Francophone, deaf and/or have a disability, or persons of colour. It’s being funded out of the \$25 million market development fund that Netflix announced last September.

In addition, the Canadian Storytellers Project will support 10 fellowships each year through the Hot Docs’ Doc Accelerator program, which is a two-day private lab held during the festival, in which emerging filmmakers learn from industry experts. Following the festival, participants will complete a work placement with an established production company from their region of the country.

The announcement is the latest in a string of Netflix-related announcements pertaining to Canadian organizations and companies. Earlier in the month, Netflix revealed it had **partnered with Montreal’s L’institut national de l’image et du son** (INIS) to develop a new production apprenticeship program.

The U.S. streamer has also commissioned a trio of new dramas from Canadian production companies over the past few weeks, with High Park Entertainment’s ***V-Wars***, Nomadic Pictures’ ***The Order*** and Halfire’s ***Another Life*** all receiving 10-episode orders, in addition to a comedy special exploring the legacy of Canadian sketch show ***SCTV***.

In other Hot Docs news, the festival also announced Monday (April 30) that Montreal-based producer Ina Fichman has been named this year’s recipient of the Don Haig Award, which recognizes outstanding Canadian producers. Fichman, who is the founder of Intuitive Pictures, will be presented with the award, along with a \$10,000 prize, on May 4. Her previous credits include *Undying Love*, *Being Dorothy*, *Black Coffee*, *S&M: Short and Male* and *Malls R Us*.

Toronto.com – April 30, 2018

Brett Hendrie: 5 things I love about the Hot Docs Festival

Brett Hendrie is executive director of Hot Docs

Opinion Apr 30, 2018 by Brett Hendrie Toronto.com



Brett Hendrie is the executive director of the Hot Docs Festival, which runs from April 26 to May 6. - Hot Docs/photo

Global filmmakers: Every year Hot Docs looks forward to welcoming hundreds of filmmakers from around the world to premiere their films at the Festival.

Meeting the film subjects: Many subjects featured in the docs we screen attend the Festival, and it's always interesting to meet these real-world subjects, and to hear from them first-hand with the many Q&A's we run.

Interactive exhibits: It's exciting to see the future of documentaries in virtual reality at our DocX program, which this year has grown to include 14 virtual and interactive exhibits.

Finding the best of the best: Watching the audience rating change throughout the week of the Festival is always thrilling, and it's extremely satisfying to award the top rated Canadian film with a \$50,000 prize.

Docs for Schools: We love hosting thousands of students with our Docs For Schools program, which runs 10 free screenings out of our cinema for high school students across Ontario.

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival will run from April 26 through May 6. For information and showtimes, visit www.hotdocs.ca

<https://www.toronto.com/opinion-story/8570441-brett-hendrie-5-things-i-love-about-the-hot-docs-festival/>

'Won't You Be My Neighbor?' Jumps to #1 in Hot Docs Audience Award Race

Posted on April 30th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



By Pat Mullen

It's a beautiful day in the neighbourhood for Morgan Neville. The Oscar-winning director's excellent Mr. Rogers doc *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* jumped to the #1 spot in the Hot Docs Audience Award rankings on the fifth day of the festival. The doc was previously in fourth. Yesterday's #1, *Eternity Never Surrendered*, fell off the chart entirely. Evidently weren't the only ones who saw it and were left scratching our heads.

In the race for the top Canadian doc, *Transformer* holds steady at the top (#2 overall) for the third way in a row. *The Accountant of Auschwitz* is coming up fast.

The Top 20 Docs in the Audience Award race are:

1. Won't You Be My Neighbor?
2. Transformer
3. Gurrumul
4. The Accountant of Auschwitz
5. Commander Arian – A Story of Women, War and Freedom
6. The Game Changers
7. 93QUEEN
8. Global Family
9. The Silence of Others
10. Letter from Masanjia
11. McQueen
12. Warrior Women
13. Exit Music

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- 14. Don't Be Nice
- 15. Mr. Fish: Cartooning From the Deep End
- 16. Three Identical Strangers
- 17. Mr. SOUL!
- 18. United Skates
- 19. The Artist & the Pervert
- 20. The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Director Stephen Low on his new doc The Trolley, the beauty of streetcars and shooting on IMAX

BARRY HERTZ

PUBLISHED APRIL 30, 2018UPDATED APRIL 30, 2018



Stephen Low says Rob Ford and his anti-streetcar stance inspired him to make the documentary.

STEPHEN LOW

When you think of documentaries, the operative word is “small.” These are generally small-budget films with few resources and often diminished theatrical exposure. But Canadian director Stephen Low doesn’t do small – his docs are made for the biggest screen possible: IMAX. The long-time large-format pioneer – whose father, Colin Low, helped develop the revolutionary medium – makes his way to Toronto’s Hot Docs with the festival’s first-ever IMAX offering, *The Trolley*. The *Globe and Mail* spoke with Low about the doc – which is part public-transportation polemic, part ode to the hugeness of the IMAX format – ahead of its world premiere May 5.

The film, which advocates heavily for the revitalization of the streetcar around the world, seems like it’s Doug Ford’s worst nightmare.

It was Rob Ford who was in power when I first pondered this thing, actually. He inspired me to make it because he was always going on and on about subways, and then I think Stephen Harper came to town and said he didn’t like streetcars because they got in his way. Well, dude, there are 100 people on that streetcar, and you’re getting in their way.

Do you have a car?

Yeah, I have a little Volkswagen. I’m a motor monkey, so I’m a bit of a hypocrite. But I live in the suburbs of Montreal, where there’s no great option.

The film mostly focuses on Toronto’s rail system. When did you first become intrigued by it?

The Globe and Mail – April 30, 2018 (2 of 3)

When I was a kid, I worked at the Canadian Railway Museum, so the passion was there from way back. But I was mostly interested in the wisdom of Toronto when, compared with virtually everywhere else in the Western world, streetcar tracks were being destroyed. Toronto was one of the few cities that kept a big system, so I wanted to understand why.

Are you optimistic of the streetcar's future, not only in Toronto but across the world?

It's a battle, in every single jurisdiction. It's a battle between people who want to save the world, and those who couldn't care less or don't do the math or are simply wedded to the automobile. The purpose of this film is to say, give people sharp tools to fight these battles because the car lobby will fight it.

Why was a documentary about streetcars, then, a good fit for IMAX?

Having travelled across the world and having seen how beautiful cities could be without cars, there's this visceral, aesthetic sense to the rail system. Getting close to a rail system is even better than filming a car race, because we go so slowly that you get a terrific, kinetic point of view. If people could see that, and feel that, on a giant screen, I thought it would help sell the idea of streetcars.

What kind of challenges did you face shooting these massive machines on IMAX?

We used the latest digital equipment for this, mounting cameras on streetcars and leaving them running for long periods. We had cranes and dollies and helicopters, too, but we want to get as close as possible to achieve this high-depth visual look. We're not running around with an iPhone, that's for sure.

So what do you make, as a large-format film advocate, of someone such as Steven Soderbergh shooting his movie *Unsane* on an iPhone?

That's sort of a Hollywood thing, and they're weak compared to IMAX. Historically, IMAX has 10 times the resolution of what he's doing with his iPhone. We practise the art of high-res.

Hollywood is investing in IMAX films a bit more, though, with something like Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*.

It's still very expensive to use, though. I don't envy Chris. His daily costs are in the millions of dollars because you have hundreds of people standing around all day to wait for light – light is critical in IMAX. Hollywood can't afford it. It's never in the cards for Hollywood to widely use IMAX cameras.

Where is the future of the format going, then?

I hope there's money for educational films – that's what real IMAX was designed for: the science institutions and educational institutions. Seeing an IMAX film, it's inspiring for kids to learn. But films like that, films like *The Trolley*, are very hard to fund. There's no return on investment in IMAX. It needs sponsorship to make it work.

The Globe and Mail – April 30, 2018 (3 of 3)

How did you fund The Trolley?

We funded a lot of it ourselves, and we went into hock, basically. This kind of work, it's a work of passion.

The Trolley screens for free at the Cinesphere Ontario Place theatre in Toronto on May 5 (hotdocs.ca)

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-director-stephen-low-on-his-new-doc-the-trolley-the-beauty-of/>

Honra Underwood a leyenda de la TV



El actor narra y produce del documental "Mr Soul!", sobre el conductor Ellis Haizlip. Foto: archivo

Juan Carlos García / Enviado

Toronto, Canadá (30 abril 2018).- Involucrarse en documentales como **Mr. Soul!**, el cual narra y produce, es una tarea casi obligada para el actor Blair Underwood, ya que así recapitula momentos históricos que no deben olvidarse.

En esta cinta, sobre el fallecido anfitrión del programa **Soul**, Ellis Haizlip, varios famosos aplauden la trascendencia del show, que dio un espacio a la comunidad afroamericana para cantar en vivo y mostrar su arte.

"Todos tenemos historia, pero hay personajes que sin duda marcaron huella, como Ellis. A la comunidad nunca se le debe olvidar que abrió puertas y que marcó un hito.

"Es casi una obligación para mi poder involucrarme con este tipo de proyectos, porque que además de ser figura pública hay que entender que tenemos la misión de recordar nuestra historia", resaltó Underwood.

El largometraje, que se estrena esta semana en el Hot Docs de Toronto, los cineastas Melissa Haizlip (sobrina de Ellis) y Samuel D. Pollard enfatizan la relevancia del trabajo del conductor que lanzó a Patti Labelle, Arsenio Hall, Earth Wind & Fire y James Baldwin.

La producción recopila los mejores momentos del programa y entrevista a personalidades de la época, como Sonia Sanchez y Kathleen Cleaver, además de mostrar apariciones de Sidney Poitier y Gladys Knight.

"Pienso que así como existen las clases de historia, en algún momento las nuevas generaciones deben voltear a ver el esfuerzo de grandes personalidades como Ellis.

"Sentó un precedente para hablar de temas relacionados con la gente negra, antes no había espacios. A raíz de su intervención y su esfuerzo muchas personalidades hoy tienen abiertas las puertas", dijo la directora.

Reforma – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

Los entrevistados hablan de cómo Haizlip, quien fue abiertamente homosexual, dio voz a la comunidad afroamericana en la TV y cuyo legado se mantiene presente en la carrera de figuras como Oprah Winfrey, Mariah Carey, Beyoncé y Janet Jackson, entre otras.

<https://www.reforma.com/aplicacioneslibre/articulo/default.aspx?id=1381969&md5=fc00eedd3e7ae97c31058c0566e0d3aa&ta=f0b5836fe576e9c545be48c0127ad20a&refMW=1>

Evocan al mejor McQueen



El filme 'McQueen' se presenta en el Festival de Cine Hot Docs, en Toronto. Foto: tomada del sitio: www.hotdocs.ca

Juan Carlos García / Enviado

Toronto, Canadá (30 abril 2018).- Pasiona, explosivo, cariñoso, buen amigo y muy obsesivo era Alexander Lee McQueen, según los testimonios y las entrevistas nunca antes vistas del diseñador que forman parte del documental **McQueen**.

Esta realización de los directores Ian Bonhote y Peter Ettedgui, que se acaba de estrenar en el festival de documentales Hot Docs, de Toronto, puso en el radar cinematográfico al popular diseñador que se suicidó a los 40 años y que fue conocido como el "enfant terrible" del mundo de la moda.

"Desde el principio tenía sobrepeso, y no le importó, los estándares de la moda lo hicieron irse por un camino escabroso. Recurrió a la liposucción y las drogas...

¡barbaridad! Al final dicen que era muy exitoso, pero muy infeliz".

Ian Bonhote

codirector

"Lo que más ha sorprendido a la gente que ha visto el documental es que se muestra como un ser humano muy cariñoso, muy humano. Cuando formó parte de Givenchy, desde el inicio hizo equipo con las costureras y sastres, lo cual no era permitido antes estaba prohibido que entraran a su taller", precisó Bonhote en entrevista.

"Eso, y que hacía muy buena amistad con sus modelos, con sus costureros y con todo su equipo. A todos los trataba por igual", añadió Ettedgui.

El material biográfico fue recopilado por los cineastas con entrevistas nunca antes publicadas, clips que tenía la familia del diseñador y diversos fragmentos que tenían sus amigos, los cuales fungan como testimonios del documental.

En éste, hablan algunas de las personas que fueron muy cercanas al inglés, quien murió el 11 de febrero del 2010, como el diseñador Romeo Gigli, la musa y mentora del astro de la moda,

Isabella Blow, la estilista Mira Chai-Hyde, la agente Alice Smith, la modelo Jodie Kidd, la hermana de Alexander, Janet, y el hijo de ésta, Gary James McQueen.

Reforma – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

Admiradores o no del británico, señalaron los directores, quienes acudan a ver esta producción descubrirán pormenores muy precisos de él que sólo su círculo más cercano sabía.

"Era un amante de bucear y nadar, y tenía una pasión única por la fauna marina; de ahí tomó mucha inspiración para sus pasarelas.

"Le encantaban las aves, era un sibarita entrenador de halcones. Y su pasión máxima eran los perros. A uno de ellos, Minter, le dedicó su show número 13", apuntó Bonhote.

Otras revelaciones de **McQueen**, que tiene una duración de 111 minutos, es que era fan número uno de Sinéad O'Connor y del pianista Michael Nyman (quien musicalizó el documental), además de que a todas partes cargaba sus tijeras y uno de sus mejores amigos era su asistente, el español Sebastián Pons.

"Este documental es como meterse al diario de un diseñador, único y súper creativo, y profundizar en su vida a detalle. Fue conocido como Alexander, porque por sugerencia de su amiga Isabella, usó este nombre, pero todos le decían Lee".

Correspondance familiale en pleine guerre

Les lettres de ma mère aux Hot Docs



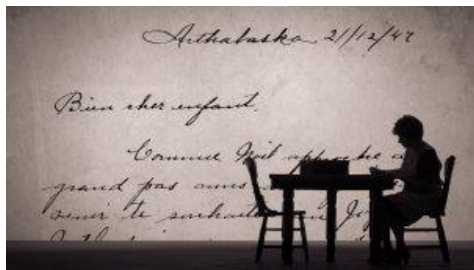
Serge Giguère en plein tournage.

Camille Simonet

30 avril 2018 à 10h00

Les lettres de ma mère est un plongeon cinématographique très intime dans l'encre de la mère de Serge Giguère, qui écrivait des lettres à son grand frère Henry entre 1940 et 1950. C'est un nouveau documentaire très personnel et familial que nous propose le réalisateur qui sera projeté à l'édition 2018 des Hot Docs, le 2, 4 et 5 mai.

Serge Giguère a pris connaissance de cet échange épistolaire en 2006. «Je ne savais pas que les lettres existaient avant ça. Mon frère aîné les avait conservés, on les a lus et on a ri», se remémore-t-il.



Extrait du documentaire «Les lettres de ma mère»

Une autre vision de la guerre

Les lettres de ma mère, c'est la retranscription filmée de cette correspondance émouvante, qui se limite au cocon familial, dans l'époque brutale de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et quelques années après.

Le but ici n'est pas de s'enfoncer dans la nostalgie, mais plutôt de donner un aperçu de la vie d'une grande famille francophone catholique de la classe ouvrière, dont Serge est le quinzième enfant sur seize.

Sans tomber dans le pathos, le réalisateur dévoile cette intimité passée. Par exemple, les sacrifices que ses frères et sœurs ont dû faire quand la guerre a pris le pas sur leurs ambitions.

Il a rassemblé tous ces moments avec «un couteau à découper». Tranchant finement chaque photo ancienne, lettre, trace de son enfance. Une manière pour lui de révéler comment il avait été construit par ce cadre familial.

CTV – April 30, 2018

New doc tells the story of an Afghan woman fighting to help addicts in Kabul

CTV | April 30, 2018



In a country of more than 30 million, it's estimated about 12 per cent of people living in Afghanistan are regular drug users—and the drug choice for many is opium.

Laila Haidari has made it her life's goal to help addicts, many of whom she finds living under a bridge in Kabul. Her story is being told in the new documentary *Laila at the Bridge*.

The film is making its North American premiere at Hot Docs (you can find screening info on the [Hot Docs website](#)) and one of the filmmakers, Elissa Sylvia Mirzaei, joined Anne-Marie in studio to talk more about the film.

<https://www.ctv.ca/YourMorning/Articles/April-2018/New-doc-tells-the-story-of-an-Afghan-woman-fightin>

The Social – April 30, 2018

New docuseries goes inside 'The New York Times' newsroom

Max Wells

April 30, 2018Fourth Estate'.



second

d will end in 25

This haunting quote comes from the groundbreaking new docuseries *The Fourth Estate*, which follows the tumultuous relationship between Donald Trump and *The New York Times*.

It's a pivotal and uncertain moment for journalism in American history. President Trump has declared some of the nation's major news outlets "the enemy of the people". He's also said *The New York Times* is "failing", suggesting that it creates "fake news". A journalist from the outlet was even barred from entering a White House briefing.

The Fourth Estate producers Jenny Carchman and Justin Wilkes as well as producer and director, Emmy-winning and Oscar-nominated filmmaker, Liz Garbus, talk about their unprecedented access inside the paper's newsroom and being on the front lines of the fight for freedom of the press.

You can catch the gripping four-part documentary, *The Fourth Estate*, on Crave TV beginning May 27.

The film also has its international premiere at the Hot Docs Film Festival on April 30, with three additional screenings over the next few days. You can find screening info on the [Hot Docs website](https://www.hotdocs.ca/).

<https://www.thesocial.ca/culture/film/new-doc-goes-inside-the-new-york-times-newsroom>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Sandra Luz López Barroso — “Artemio”

BY Laura Berger April 30, 2018

Sandra Luz López Barroso is an anthropologist and award-winning filmmaker. She's spent more than 10 years working on diverse artistic

projects in Mexico. She served as a DP on the short film “Inch Allah,” directed by Angelica Romanini. “Artemio” is her feature directorial debut.

“Artemio” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 1.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

SLLB: “Artemio” is a film about a mother and a son relationship, and more specifically their day to day in a new place where they are looking for a new beginning. Through nine-year-old Artemio's gaze, we can feel the distance and separation of families through migration.

It's a complex movie approached from an unprejudiced and honest perspective because it comes from the point of view of a nine-year-old child.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

SLLB: The idea for this project emerged 10 years ago, when I met Artemio's great-grandmother, Catalina Noyola Bruno. She is well-known in the region for being the last dancer of “artesa,” traditional music of the Costa Chica in Guerrero, México. My intention when studying cinema was to make a film that told the story of Mrs. Cata through different voices of Afro-descendant women that we met. That is, to make portraits of Afro-descendant women for whose lives Mrs. Cata was transcendental. At the end of those portraits I would join them and tell my story with her.

During one of the scoutings, Cocco Zarate found us and invited us to her house to talk. We went to record her and she told us about [Artemio's] grandmother Mamá (Mother) Cata, and we met Artemio that day.

We were delighted with the family, especially with Cocco Zarate, who told me about her travels around the world, her desire to paint and write poetry. I thought I had found a young Mrs. Cata, and I did not hesitate to remain with only one character. It would be her that contained all that I wanted to talk about: Afro, coastal, strong, sexy, and independent women.

Women and Hollywood – April 30, 2018 (2 of 3)

Artemio came later. Cocco told me that Artemio had a return ticket for the United States, so I decided to make a film about a relationship between a mother and a son that would end with a farewell, since Artemio would return to the United States.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

SLLB: I would like the audience to be touched and moved by what they saw. For me, the most important thing is that they can be moved.

The film invites us to think about migration, the separation of families, the beauty of innocence in childhood, and many other things, but for me the most important thing is the feeling that the movie leaves you.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

SLLB: When we began the shooting with the complete team, Cocco told me that Artemio was not returning to the United States, so I was a little scared. Then, the team and I decided that we would dedicate ourselves to recording the family's daily routine, the day to day.

We asked Cocco to please call the United States and to record those calls. [We also wanted to include] in the film why Artemio did not return.

It was a film that was built on a daily basis, reviewing the material each night, listening to it to know how we could structure it.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

SLLB: This film is my documentary thesis for the Film School in México, so most of the funding was from the school Cinematographic Training Center (Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica) that provides us with technical and human equipment.

Still, like in any school movie, there is an important investment of the personal resources, so I decided to apply to the DocsLAB platform of the DOCSMX festival at the end of 2016. It was on this platform that we obtained the support of the Churubusco Studios for the THX mix, as well as the support of AMBULANTE A.C. to finish the post-production processes such as color correction, music recording, and DCPs creation.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

SLLB: It is a wonderful opportunity to share the work in one of the most important documentary film festivals in Canada, as well as to generate networks of work and collaboration with documentary filmmakers from different parts of the world.

Women and Hollywood – April 30, 2018 (3 of 3)

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

SLLB: The worst advice I have received is that in order to be a female filmmaker or to be a woman in this profession, you have to give up your desire to be a mother or have a family if you want to. [Also that you] have to be strong and even aggressive with men so they learn to respect you.

The best advice was from my cinematography teacher Mercedes Porter: "Everything you do, do it with passion. If you are not doing what makes you quiver and makes your heart beat, you'd better quit."

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

SLLB: To stay united and in constant communication to create networks that allow us to collaborate in different projects, and to invite more women to work on our projects.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

SLLB: The work and career of Agnès Varda is an inspiration and constant reference for me. Her film that I like the most is "The Beaches of Agnès," because it is a deep and heartfelt reflection of what to do in the cinema and in her own life.

Barbara Kopple's upcoming film looks at immigration in Canada

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Updated: April 30, 2018

TORONTO — Two-time Oscar-winning American documentary filmmaker Barbara Kopple has her sights set on Canada.

On Thursday, she'll speak onstage in Toronto as part of her outstanding achievement award retrospective at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

And her upcoming film looks at families from Syria and Iraq who have come to Canada courtesy of sponsors here.

"I wanted to do a film that was about immigration and the beauty of immigration from this country, when we're going through such horrors in (the U.S.)," Kopple, who lives south of the border, said in a recent interview in Toronto.

"And I wanted to do it through the eyes of kids."

Kopple said she's already shot the film and is nearly finished it. The story focuses on Camp Pathfinder in Algonquin Park, where boys from the Syrian and Iraqi families she follows were able to attend thanks to their sponsors.

"It was the first time any of them had been away from home and they learned to paddle canoes, go tripping, go on portages, swim, integrate themselves with their Americans and Canadians," Kopple said.

"It's funny at times — and tragic at times."

Kopple often fixes her lens on stories of strength through adversity.

Her first Oscar-winning doc, 1976's "Harlan County, USA," details a coal miners' strike to demand safer working conditions in a small Kentucky town. Her second Oscar came in 1991 for "American Dream," about a strike against wage cuts at a meat-packing company in Austin, Minn.

Edmonton Journal – April 30, 2018 (2 of 3)

Kopple's other projects have included 2006's "Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing," about the backlash the country music trio faced when lead singer Natalie Maines publicly criticized the then-U.S. president.

Kopple said she uses "any means necessary" to get access to subjects and situations for her docs, noting: "If they slammed the door on my face, I'd open it and come in."

Not that it's been an easy ride.

"We were machine-gunned with semi-automatic carbines, a miner was killed by a company foreman, women took over the picket line," she recalled of her time shooting "Harlan County, USA," which she made with a \$12,000 loan, money from her parents and credit cards.

"I was told if I was ever caught alone at night, I'd be killed."

Kopple's Hot Docs honour comes as the fest boasts gender parity for the first time, with 50 per cent of this year's films coming from female directors.

"The barrier to entry perhaps is a little bit lower for documentary than fiction film," said Shane Smith, director of programming for Hot Docs.

"You can pick up a camera and you can tell a story, and if you can shape a story effectively, you can make a really great documentary."

Maya Gallus, whose doc "The Heat" is at the fest, said documentaries also don't cost as much to make.

"Any profession where we don't require as much financing, you're going to see more women," said Gallus.

"But also because it's more portable, the hours are more flexible. For women who are trying to balance many things, including having a family, documentary can be more flexible than working in dramatic TV series or feature film."

Kopple said women in the doc world also don't have to answer to as many top executives, who are often men.

Edmonton Journal – April 30, 2018 (3 of 3)

“We just go out on our own and we film and nobody knows what the story is unless we do, and we’re in the edit room putting it together and it’s no pressure whatsoever,” said Kopple.

“The pressure, however, is to get financing. The pressure is to get the people that you make the film about to trust you and care about you, and that’s where all of your might goes and that’s where your thoughts go, because they mean everything to you.”

Barbara Kopple's upcoming film looks at immigration in Canada

THE CANADIAN PRESS 

The Canadian Press April 30, 2018



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Yahoo Movies – April 30, 2018 (2 of 3)

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Yahoo Movies – April 30, 2018 (3 of 3)

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Victoria Ahearn, The Canadian Press

DOCUMENTARY ABOUT FEMALE HASIDIC TRAILBLAZERS GETS WORLD PREMIERE IN CANADA

By **Michael Fraiman**

April 30, 2018



The women of Ezras Nashim train to become EMTs. (93QUEEN screenshot)

Last spring, at a reception in downtown Toronto filled with maybe 200 people, Paula Eiselt wasn't paying attention when someone announced that her documentary had won \$75,000.

"I was flabbergasted," the New York-based director says. She was in the city for a pitch competition held by Toronto's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, vying for prize money based on an airtight seven-minute pitch. Her competitors were filmmakers telling stories about underdog Somali basket players and the Central Asian slave trade, far-flung stories of human struggle in difficult lands.

In contrast, Eiselt's film – *93QUEEN*, which follows a group of Hasidic women in Borough Park as they kickstart their own volunteer-run ambulance corps called Ezras Nashim – felt smaller, she thought.

So it shocked her when she was chatting away and heard her movie's name announced as the first-place winner. "We were just like, Oh my god, that's us!" she tells *The CJN*. "It was a crazy moment."



Canadian Jewish News – April 30, 2018 (2 of 3)

Rachel “Ruchie” Freier, the leader of Ezras Nashim. (93QUEEN screenshot)

Now, one year later, Eiselt is back in the city for the world première of *93QUEEN* at the 25th Hot Docs festival. The film debuted to a sold-out audience on April 29, and will screen twice more during the festival – on May 1 and May 6 – while Eiselt is currently negotiating a wider North American release for the fall.

The film details the consistent struggle to establish an important community service. Borough Park is dominantly ultra-Orthodox, and most women in that community have never so much as held hands with a man who is not their husband. When a group of strange men show up to deliver her baby for the first time, for example, it can be a traumatic experience.

The male community leaders, on the other hand, refuse to accept women as belonging anywhere but in their homes. In particular, they see the women’s group’s leader – Rachel “Ruchie” Freier, a local ultra-Orthodox real estate lawyer – as some kind of secret feminist interloper bent on destroying their way of life.

It’s a title she has to fight against. The film’s most fascinating moments come when Freier publicly disowns the “feminist” label, even as she crusades for women’s rights to safety and freedom of choice in her community.

“Feminism is a secular concept,” Freier says in a radio interview during the film. “If you have a life that’s filled with Torah values, you don’t need feminism.”

When Eiselt first heard about Freier’s story more than six years ago, she wanted desperately to document it on camera. But Freier was reluctant – getting an inside look at the Hasidic

community is notoriously difficult, and access would require trust. Eiselt, who is modern Orthodox, spent months corresponding with Freier before she was allowed in.

“I knew how hard it was to get access to this community, but I felt like no matter what, it was going to happen,” she says. “Once Ruchie came on, I felt that it would happen.”

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But while the pushback against Freier's EMT project was vitriolic, the hurdles thrown at Eiselt herself – a woman making a movie about trailblazing Hasidic women – were almost as bad.

"It's been hard," Eiselt acknowledges. Men sent her angry messages, even threats, just like the kinds they send Freier in the film. Some women who wanted to participate in the film could not, because their husbands didn't agree to it. (Appearing on film is considered immodest for ultra-Orthodox women.)

But Eiselt is conscious of their beliefs, and steers the film – and surrounding conversation – away from targeting men and toward a positive change for Hasidic women.

"It's not just about how the men react to women's empowerment, but how the women react to it internally," she explains. "Doing something like this, that is controversial, undoubtedly, is not easy and it's really hard for people. It's not an easy ride."

<http://www.cjnews.com/culture/entertainment/documentary-about-female-hasidic-trailblazers-gets-world-premiere-in-canada>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Christy Garland — “What Walaa Wants”

BY Laura Berger April 30, 2018

Christy Garland has directed award-winning and critically acclaimed documentary features and fiction shorts. Her credits include “Cheer Up,” “The Bastard Sings the Sweetest Song,” and “Doormat.”

“What Walaa Wants” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 1.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

CG: Walaa is a charismatic, strong-willed 16-year-old who lives in Balata Refugee Camp in the Palestinian Territories. She was raised by her aunt and sisters while her mother, Latifa, served eight years in prison for conspiring to bring a bomb into a nearby settlement.

The story begins soon after Latifa is released from prison, when Walaa announces she wants to be a policewoman on the Palestinian Security Forces. She faces opposition from her family. But Walaa persists, applies and, to her surprise, gets in.

Walaa’s background in Balata Camp has exposed her to trauma, poverty, midnight raids by the IDF, and a culture of martyrdom. It is perfectly normal for family and friends of all ages and for all reasons, and sometimes no reason at all, to end up in prison. Walaa is a fighter who has learned to follow her own rules and look after herself.

The atmosphere of discipline at the police academy triggers Walaa’s defensive behavior, which threatens to get her kicked out. After several reprimands and nearly losing the support of her peers, she is told by an officer that she is cared for, and really good at something.

For the first time, she has a real reason to have hope in her own future, and she begins to let down her guard and channel her energy in a positive direction. She works hard, supports her peers, and begins to understand what it means to be a proud Palestinian.

But even if she manages to earn that uniform, returning home to Balata Camp will severely test her ability to stay on that positive path.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

CG: I was in the West Bank researching the possibility of another film. Walaa immediately caught my attention when I encountered her in Balata Camp—a significant place in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where the first and second intifadas originated. She was

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strong, clever, very charismatic, but clearly frustrated on some profound level, and unusually rebellious among her well-behaved peers. I was curious to know what she was going to do with all that energy.

When I found out she wanted to be a police officer, a somewhat complicated goal when you're from Balata Camp, I knew there was a story there.

Very often, depictions of women in troubled regions focus on their victimhood and their oppressors. Walaa and her mother are many things, but they certainly aren't victims, and the fact that Walaa was determined to control her own fate, with a very specific goal, gave the film a compelling story to focus on within the larger, complicated political context.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

CG: As an unfolding story shot without interviews or voiceover, and rooted as intimately as possible in Walaa's point of view, this film puts us in a position where we experience the pressures of Walaa's world through her eyes. We get to experience Walaa's "normal" and understand her and her family to whatever extent possible.

My hope is that it helps people see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a fresh and deeply personal perspective, however narrow the scope, and contributes something to the larger conversation.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

CG: The West Bank, as well as Gaza, is one of the most sensitive places to bring a camera, because of an extremely complicated conflict spanning generations. I knew that the film would not escape being scrutinized from all directions and for several reasons: the presence of Walaa's mother, Latifa; the depiction of Israel's military presence in the West Bank; controversy among Palestinians regarding the Palestinian Authority and the Security Forces; Balata Camp with its atmosphere of resistance against the Israeli occupation; and the celebration of martyrdom and violence.

Walaa's environment, and the forces that act upon her story, are multi-layered. It was a challenge to make sure all of those elements were represented, and not in any way biased, however complicated they are.

Early on I realized that the only clarity this film could bring was a privileged view into Walaa's world, faithfully and honestly from her point of view, while acknowledging, in an organic way, the larger forces that surrounded her.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

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CG: It began with a grant from the Canada Arts Council, which funded the gathering of all the most important early material. Once I had enough material delineating the characters and the story, I was very lucky to have, from a very early stage, the involvement of Anne Köhncke, a producer at Final Cut for Real in Denmark. She brought support from the Danish Film Institute, Danida in Denmark, and the Tribeca Gucci Documentary Fund, while we spent years pitching the project at various forums in Sheffield, IDFA, and Hot Docs. I was still shooting during this period.

After that, Canadian producer Matt Code and the National Film Board of Canada came on board and most recently the OMDC Film Fund in Canada.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

CG: Hot Docs is a very dear festival to me; it premiered my earlier films and has such a loyal, warm, enthusiastic audience. I'm very happy to be returning with "What Walaa Wants."

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

CG: I was told by someone that the way to succeed in documentary is to make films about famous people. I love those films, but I'm very passionate about showing the extraordinary lives of ordinary people, and doing what I can to facilitate empathy even in the most unlikely places.

The best advice I've had, from various sources, is follow your own instincts and don't compare yourself to other filmmakers or their films.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

CG: The only thing you have that no one else has is your individual life experience and how that shapes your way of seeing the world. Create original films by being as true to that as possible.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

CG: There are so many, but Agnès Varda's films, and particularly the wisdom and humanity of her recent ones, remind me that I should keep making films until I run out of steam. She certainly hasn't yet!

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

CG: I think the last while has been tumultuous and disturbing, and it has thrown me back into the years I worked in film production as an A.D., working on sets while I tried to get started as a

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filmmaker. In my mind the problematic assumptions of what was joked about as “cinematic immunity”—the notion that a film’s production needs allow it to impose on the public however necessary—also applied to [how sexual harassment was treated]. It was extremely commonplace on set. We all have our stories.

Obviously the movement is long past due and I hope it continues to build toward a reality soon where everyone, from all backgrounds, has equal opportunity—and neither men nor women need to navigate their way around sexual harassment, condescension, and unfair barriers in order to find the same opportunities to tell their own stories alongside everyone else.

'Playing Hard' lifts the lid on the stressful birth of a big-budget video game

The Canadian Press

Updated: April 30, 2018

TORONTO — From his office two blocks away, filmmaker Jean-Simon Chartier watched Ubisoft's Montreal video game studio grow from a few hundred people to more than 3,000. And he saw the explosive worldwide growth of the gaming industry.

So Chartier decided to "get inside this fortress and find a story to tell." He came up with "Playing Hard," the story behind the creation of Ubisoft's fighting game "For Honor." The 90-minute film has its world premiere Wednesday at Toronto's Hot Docs festival.

"Playing Hard" offers a rare peak under the video game hood, following Ubisoft Montreal creative director Jason VandenBerghe, producer Stephane Cardin and brand manager Luc Duchaine over four years as their production team on the game grew from fewer than 40 to more than 500.

It documents the stresses of making a so-called triple-A big-budget title, from the bottom-line demands of corporate headquarters in Paris to the pressure of delivering the game on time. There is drama inside and outside "For Honor," which offers gamers the chance to fight as knights, Vikings and samurai in a world whose "hardy inhabitants eke a living as they can in spite of living in a state of near perpetual war."

After convincing Ubisoft to let him shoot behind the scenes, Chartier was given the boot eight months into the project with the studio saying some people were uncomfortable by his presence. It took six months to get back inside.

"It was a lot of discussion and developing a trust, relationship with the main characters," said the 44-year-old Chartier. "They were the ones that helped me with top management."

Chartier had his own problems, shooting for 2 1/2 years without financing.

"But I was willing to take the risk because I was expecting something to happen," he said.

He anticipated drama, given the pressures of producing the game. Also stress, conflict and passion.

"They were all things I was looking for," he said.

Chartier, whose gaming experience was limited to time spent playing Super Mario Bros. and Donkey Kong years ago, was more interested in the emotions stirred up in making the game than the game itself.

The stress takes its toll on all three protagonists with the film showing them criss-crossing the globe to showcase the game and try to create buzz for its release date.

VandenBerghe is the tortured visionary who has spent years trying to take the game from inside his head to the consumer. Cardin is the quarterback and quartermaster, tasked with meeting deadlines and satisfying head office. Duchaine is the meticulous marketer, trying to sell the project while agonizing over the time spent away from his family.

VandenBerghe is shown during the credits, dressed in black getting ready for battle.

He might as well be a knight, with jewelry replacing chain mail. He starts by putting on nine rings then an assortment of bracelets before ensuring his long hair is tied up correctly.

"Do you want to keep this 5 o'clock shadowy-thing going?" asks a stylist before a TV appearance later in the film.

"It's part of the look," he responds. "This is just what I am. Melodramatic. It's just the deal."

Montreal Gazette – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

Chartier calls VandenBerghe “a complex person.” He gives the game’s visionary lots of face time in the film, often shooting him alone in the wilderness while VandenBerghe offers up his world vision.

“Physically he looks like a warrior. He looks like a game character,” said Chartier. “He’s a philosopher. He’s anxious. He’s really, really compelling and you feel that after you spend a few days with him.

“I was expecting something to happen with this guy.”

It does as the film takes an unexpected twist.

Ubisoft had no say in the final product and Chartier says he has yet to hear their thoughts on the project. He says Cardin and Duchaine both thought the film was true to their story.

As for Chartier, he intends to buy a console to get some more hands-on time on video gaming.

“But that’s not where I started (this project),” he said. “I started this because I see people around me that are transforming the whole entertainment industry and actually the whole world we live in. And it’s two blocks away.

“I was an opportunist, trying to get into this fortress. But I mean as a human being, as a filmmaker, I’m interested in many many topics. Gaming has become one of them.”

He eventually got some financing from Tele-Quebec for a three-part series on video gaming, combining that with his work on “Playing Hard.”

Prior to filmmaking, Chartier spent 3 1/2 years in advertising. But his life changed when he took nine months off to backpack around Latin America.

“As clichéd as it might be, it really opened me to other realities,” he said.

He started writing stories about his travels, sharing them with friends and colleagues via email. People liked them

“I discovered that I could tell stories,” he said.

He went to Asia with a camera, looking to expand that story-telling. The project never came off so he returned to advertising, but making documentaries had become his passion.

“It took me more than 10 years before the first one was finally (done), the first real one,” he said.

“Then I started my own company — little company.”

Chartier, whose company is MC2 Communication Media, has made TV documentaries that include looks at the Burning Man Art festival in Nevada (“Encountering Burning Man”), cosmetic surgery (“Body a La Carte”), Dominican monks (“Alleluia”), motivational speakers (“Marchands de Bonheur”) and a young actress/musician’s journey as she ponders whether to join a religious order (“Sister Violaine”).

“Playing Hard” is his first feature documentary as a director.

He hopes to find more avenues to showcase the film after “Hot Docs,” with a digital release slated for the end of the year.

'Playing Hard' lifts the lid on the stressful birth of a big-budget video game

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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The Chronicle Herald – April 30, 2018 (2 of 4)

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The Chronicle Herald – April 30, 2018 (3 of 4)

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The Chronicle Herald – April 30, 2018 (4 of 4)

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<http://thechronicleherald.ca/artslife/1566663-playing-hard-lifts-the-lid-on-the-stressful-birth-of-a-big-budget-video-game>

'Playing Hard' lifts the lid on the stressful birth of a big-budget video game

The Canadian Press

Updated: April 30, 2018

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“They were all things I was looking for,” he said.

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The stress takes its toll on all three protagonists with the film showing them criss-crossing the globe to showcase the game and try to create buzz for its release date.

Edmonton Journal – April 30, 2018 (2 of 3)

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She Does the City – April 30, 2018 (1 of 2)

#HOTDOCS2018: LAILA AT THE BRIDGE – Q&A W/ DIRECTOR ELISSA SYLVIA MIRZAEI

POSTED ON APRIL 30, 2018

In *Laila at the Bridge*, [Elizabeth Sylvia Mirzaei](#) has co-created a film that tells the story of a woman working against all odds to help those who have been shut out of society. In it, Afghan woman Laila works to help the thousands of men and women addicted to heroin who live under an infamous bridge in the heart of Kabul.

The North American premiere takes place today, April 30, at Hot Docs. We asked Mirzaei about the film this week.



Directors Elizabeth Mirzaei and Gulistan Mirzaei

How did you first come to hear of Laila and the work she was doing?

My husband and co-director, Gulistan, and I read a newspaper article about a woman-owned restaurant where all the waiters were recovered heroin addicts and it intrigued us enough to meet with the owner. We thought Laila was a force to be reckoned with, and over time she agreed to let us follow her journey.



What were the specific challenges you faced during filming?

She Does the City – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

We had some risky situations under the bridge where we did a lot of filming, as well as in some of the areas outside of Kabul. In shipping numerous hard drives out of Kabul for safekeeping, we also lost some footage. It was devastating, but a friend and mentor of mine reminded me to focus on what I have and not what I don't.

Did you uncover anything that surprised you?

I learned so many things over the course of this film, one of which is that creating and giving birth to a human being takes significantly less time than finishing a film!



Who in the film affected you the most, and why?

While everyone I filmed affected me in some way, I think most often about Sayed Jamil. Aside from Laila, we filmed with him for the longest, but there's so much of his story that happened when my camera wasn't rolling. He wanted to get clean, and Gulistan and I took many late-night and early-morning trips to meet him and try to help him out of whatever predicament he was in. I'm still in regular contact with his uncle, who bears a strong resemblance to Sayed Jamil, so I feel in some way like I'm able to see him again.

What do you hope audiences take away from this doc?

I hope that audiences find something to love in Afghanistan, in Laila's perseverance and tenacity, and in the resilience of the Afghan people. And I hope people recognize that the tragic state of affairs in Afghanistan is something that much of the world is collectively responsible for. Just as Laila gives second chances to people who society writes off, we should also realize that Afghanistan is not a lost cause.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Trisha Ziff — “Witkin & Witkin”

BY Sophie Willard April 30, 2018

Trisha Ziff has worked for the last 25 years as a writer, editor, curator, and documentary filmmaker. Her feature credits include “The Mexican Suitcase,” and “The Man Who Saw Too Much,” which won two Mexican Academy Awards.

“Witkin & Witkin” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 1.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

TZ: “Witkin & Witkin” is a film about identical twins, both acclaimed artists—a painter, and a photographer. I wanted to make a film that looked beyond their work to their relationship with each other and the world around them.

We see Joel and Jerome in their homes, not only making work in their studios. The models they work with speak about their experiences, and these are voices we don’t often hear—the studio assistant, the collector, their sister—as well as their partners. The women in their lives have supported their creative process in different ways but for the most part these contributions, as with many artists, are invisible.

“Witkin & Witkin” is a reflective film—it tells the story of two artists in the winter of their lives looking back, their survival, and personal losses. It tells a story of commitment, passion, and about being true to one’s own vision—two lives without compromise.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

TZ: I knew the work of both artists independently, and have great respect for their art; Jerome the painter, and Joel-Peter the photographer. Yet I knew nothing of their relationship. When I began making the film they rarely spoke to one another—only on their birthday or if there was a specific reason. The intimacy of twins we assume, and often consider “special,” yet in their case this did not keep them close, and they went their separate ways as young men.

I was fascinated by the contradiction of their distance, yet that the content of their work often resonates with similar themes and concerns, leading me to conclude that despite the distance, there is still a powerful connection.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

TZ: Perhaps the film will prompt the audience to explore the work of the two protagonists, Joel-Peter and Jerome. Many people already know the work of Joel-Peter Witkin—he is one of the

Women and Hollywood – April 30, 2018 (2 of 4)

most celebrated photographers of the 20th century—but Jerome’s work is a marvelous surprise! But I hope the reactions of audiences go beyond this.

Joel-Peter Witkin speaks about seeing beauty in people and places most would dismiss. I think his photographs profoundly challenge dominant cultural notions of beauty. He speaks of “loving the unloved.” Both brothers display through their own work profound humanity. Loving the unloved is about kindness, about generosity. I think if an audience—through their stories—can reflect on that, this film will have served a bigger purpose [by offering] important ways of seeing, especially in these times.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

TZ: For sure the biggest challenge was making a film [a dialogue between] two characters that never interact directly and never speak with each other even when in the same physical space.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

TZ: The funding for this film tells its own important story. “Witkin & Witkin” is a Mexican film—over 95 percent of the funds came from EFECINE in Mexico—yet the language spoken in this film is predominantly English. The protagonists are American.

I think this says something important regarding Mexican cinema, and its breadth of seeing beyond its borders, and that culturally when looking north, the perception South to North is significantly different to [that of] the North looking South.

“Witkin & Witkin” is an independent film. The filmmakers own 100 percent of the film, and also have final cut.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

TZ: This is my third visit to Hot Docs! But this year is special as Hot Docs is focusing on Mexican documentary, so to have “Witkin & Witkin” in this section of the festival is important. Immediately after the earthquake last October in Mexico, Hot Docs came through for filmmakers by extending waivers to everyone.

The majority of filmmakers—not only documentarians—immediately stopped work to participate in the rescue and support effort in the following days and weeks. Others were directly affected by the earthquake, losing their offices and homes. One of the most important archives in Mexico of popular Mexican cinema was also badly damaged by the quake in Tepotztlan—the effects were widespread.

Women and Hollywood – April 30, 2018 (3 of 4)

This act of solidarity from Hot Docs was an important gesture but more than that I think within North American cinema, Canada and Mexico have an important role, and Hot Docs is a part of that strengthening cinematic dialogue.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

TZ: I don't think there is such a thing as worst advice but the best advice I believe came to me recently from an Israeli woman director. I was struggling around my current film in how I was addressing political issues I may not totally have empathy with. She said to me, "Trisha, people can only handle so much. One struggle at a time; be less judgmental."

I hear her voice in my head often. I don't think what she said applies only to those in front of the camera but [also] to our expectations of ourselves.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

TZ: Women are good listeners. We of course come from different heritages and traditions but perhaps what we share in common is that often we are the keepers of personal narratives. I think in that way women are powerful documentarians. I would say to use this innate aspect of our gender to tell the very best stories.

Never think of yourself as anything other than empowered, and draw on the support and energy of other women—older women, younger women, women working in diverse cultural realities. Sisterhood is powerful. We do create change! Our voices matter. Never be an apologist!

The world is changing because women are demanding change, and the next generation of women directors will continue and improve on our legacy, I am sure.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

TZ: Agnès Varda's [films], without a doubt. For me coming from a history of photography, her work impressed me immensely—long before I made my first documentary. I think "The Gleaners and I" stands out in my mind but all her films. For me Varda brought documentary to a new way of storytelling; intrinsically feminist in both form and content.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

TZ: Who knew that the events last year with Harvey Weinstein and Co. would lead to this potential transformation in respect to women in our industry. From the outside looking in, at first it felt a bit Hollywood centric! We spoke of the fear of witch hunts; it felt precarious.

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I think though that over these last months that has all changed. Those conversations have disappeared. What we are seeing now is, I think, something solid which can only continue to grow, not only in the film industry but impacting other industries.

The #TimesUp movement has, I believe, the possibility and collective will to make real and lasting change!

Behind the scenes at Ubisoft Montreal

WhatsOn Apr 30, 2018 The Canadian Press

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The Hamilton Spectator – April 30, 2018 (2 of 3)

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The Hamilton Spectator – April 30, 2018 (3 of 3)

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<https://www.thespec.com/whatson-story/8578299-behind-the-scenes-at-ubisoft-montreal/>

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Neil Davidson The Canadian Press
Apr 30, 2018

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Hot Docs '18: Sarah Menzies talks “Afghan Cycles”

By Selina Chignall

April 30, 2018



When Sarah Menzies dropped into Afghanistan to make what she thought would be a short film about the Women’s National Afghan Cycling Team, she soon realized what the women were doing was more than just hopping on a bike.

“I realized we would have to go deeper in the story to contextualize why these women were so brave and to explain why what they were doing was so meaningful,” Menzies tells *realscreen* ahead of *Afghan Cycles* world premiere at the Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival.

“It’s more than just getting on to a bike – it gives them freedom and independence.”

Produced by Let Media, the feature-length documentary *Afghan Cycles* follows the members of the Women’s National Cycling Team in Kabul and the young cyclists in the Bamiyan region of the country as they utilize the bicycle in their daily lives. However, the politics and societal oppression take their toll on the women, causing one to flee to France for her own safety.



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Menzies began production on the film in 2013, which would eventually span five total years to put together. The project had her return to Afghanistan on multiple trips, as well as to France, where she follows of the main characters. After the director's initial drop into Afghanistan, she returned months later with the film's producer and cinematographer Jenny Nichols to dig further into the lives and backgrounds of the women on the cycling team.

Menzies met the women during her first trip to the landlocked country located within South Asia and Central Asia, and despite communicating through a translator, she says a bond was immediately formed between the team and herself.

"I grew up playing sports. There was some recognition that we were tomboys. I can't put my finger on it – there was an energy there," she says.

Returning to Afghanistan on multiple trips helped the women and herself become closer. So when the security situation in the country began to deteriorate and the women grew increasingly concerned about their situation, Menzies says the film's subjects were open and willing to discuss their reality with her – even when the cameras were not rolling.

"Even if the language was a barrier, I wanted to make sure they saw me as a friend," Menzies explains.

Before her initial trip in 2013, Menzies notes that she has conducted a small Kickstarter campaign in order to acquire some seed money that would cover their expenses to get to

Afghanistan. Quickly, she brought on Liv, a cycling brand dedicated to women, as a partner.

"Having their backing on the film was huge, especially at that stage when we were still deciding what the film was going to become," she said.

Realscreen – April 30, 2018 (3 of 3)

Menzies later would complete a larger Kickstarter in 2015 to pull in some more money and also poured her own money into financing project. With the news of *Afghan Cycles* showing at Hot Docs, the director says additional funders have come aboard the project, including executive director Jennifer Westphal of Wavelength Productions.



While shooting in Afghanistan, Menzies kept the team small as to ensure that they were discreet and didn't bring extra attention to the cyclists lives. Her team generally consisted of herself, another person and her Afghan translator and fixer.

"When he said we had 10 seconds to get the shot, I'd be in the car in five. I let him be my gut-check because he has lived there his whole life, so I trusted him."

Even if Menzies had any sense of fear, she reminded herself that this was the reality for these women every day and that hers was only temporary.

With *Afghan Cycles* premiering almost to the date of its inception five years ago, Menzies hopes audiences attending her film will walk away with an understanding of how the bicycle has an impact on the lives of women living in oppressive countries.

"I think that it's unique and parallels in our women's suffrage where the bike played a similar role in modern times," she said.

- ***Afghan Cycles held its world premiere on April 28 and next screens on May 1 at 4 p.m.***

ET/PT at the TIFF Bell Lightbox 3

<http://realscreen.com/2018/04/30/hot-docs-18-sarah-menzies-talks-afghan-cycles/>

‘Active Measures’ Film Review: How Putin’s Tactics Stole Russia, and How They’re Corrupting the USA

Hot Docs 2018: Hillary Clinton and other experts detail Putin's chicanery -- and Trump's refusal to push back against it

Todd Gilchrist,

provided by
 **THE WRAP**
Covering Hollywood

Published 7:50 pm PDT, Monday, April 30, 2018

If the constant onslaught of revelations about the Trump administration’s relationship with various foreign nationals doesn’t already give you grey hairs on a daily basis, try watching “Active Measures,” a damning concentration of allegations that will undoubtedly leave liberals pulling those hairs out in frustration.

A methodical look at Vladimir Putin’s rise to power and the latticework of criminality that has enveloped governments worldwide, Jack Bryan’s documentary enlists a who’s-who of high-profile experts and insiders — including Hillary Clinton, John Podesta and more — for a brutal dressing-down of worldwide, metastasized corruption that falls short in laying out straight its particularly slippery bag of snakes only by suggesting the solution is to cut off their tails, not their heads.

Opening with a brief but potent biography of Putin and winding through an abridged but detailed list of transgressions to which his administration is connected, Bryan’s film explores the often intangible but wildly destructive tactics hostile governments employ as “active measures,” including propaganda, cyberattacks and agents of influence. Murdering journalists, opponents and in some likely cases, allies and even innocent civilians, Putin consolidated power under Boris Yeltsin before claiming the mantle of leadership over post-Soviet Union Russia, developing strategies (that would later be used to undermine the U.S. election) against newly-liberated countries like Georgia.

Bryan and his co-writer Marley Clements connect the dots with methodical precision, and minimal sensationalism, although they hardly need to overdramatize connections between Putin and notorious Russian mobster Semion Mogilevich, especially given the numerous flunkies (and their various criminal acts) who overlapped the pair’s Venn diagram of manipulation and malfeasance.

Putin and Mogilevich’s relationship to Trump’s mysteriously indefatigable gift for failing upward is easy to track, though the filmmakers possibly overemphasize the current president’s ability to foresee the many ways he was being manipulated, or maybe just the distance at which Putin and co. recognized he even could be a potential leader. Certainly, and with the added benefit of recent comments made by Forbes reporters about Trump’s obsession with their annual list of power players, the film makes an effective case for the abject corruption of Trump’s dealings in the 1980s, when Trump Towers served — in several cases, according to successful criminal prosecution — as “a money-laundering paradise” for shell companies to buy and sell condominiums without identifying themselves. Later, Deutsche Bank, a company with significant

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ties to Russia, supported many of Trump's endeavors long after they imploded or otherwise failed.

Most damning, though, is the sophisticated way that Bryan and Clements lay flat the history of technological attacks launched against oppositional regimes, and how brutally impactful they were because of attackers' profound understanding of the psychologies of the sociocultural ecosystems into which they were released. Footage from a Cambridge Analytica presentation, paired with interviews from experts on Russia's history of cyberattacks, elucidates the depths of attackers' knowledge about the way that various cultures work, and in particular, how the unrelenting onslaught of fake sites and phony Facebook posts (among other disseminated stories) preyed upon our specific vulnerabilities as Americans to disseminate materials that would fundamentally undermine our trust in particular candidates, our government and the system as a whole.

(The extra chill comes when an interviewee points out that literally nothing has been done to slow the spread of this attack since Trump took office.)

At 110 minutes, the film's laserlike focus keeps its talking heads from droning on too long, but also from relaying some of the anecdotal details that are probably juicier than they are relevant. (One that makes the cut is Clinton's observation that Putin likes to manspread, one of the very few instances where she digresses in any way from essential information.) But like with many other documentaries attempting to chronicle our turbulent recent history, we seem to have moved beyond an era when such thing as a clean or definitive ending exists; at the very least, we're not yet at anything that resembles one.

Not that the film doesn't try: Citing semi-successful examples in Georgia and Russia, the filmmakers end with a call to arms that suggests the divided electorate, the citizenry of the U.S., rise up and demand change, for our officials to hold themselves and their colleagues accountable and to do something to secure free and fair elections. If there's anything that "Active Measures" does most effectively, it's to demonstrate the depths and the breadth of the corruption, the criminality, the immorality operating in contemporary politics — and after seeing what we're up against, the last thing people may want to do is to get *more* involved.

Hot Docs review: Roll Red Roll

Nancy Schwartzman's account of the Steubenville, Ohio high school rape case is an urgent and necessary film in the #MeToo movement

BY **GLENN SUMI**

APRIL 30, 2018

6:01 PM



Roll Red Roll revisits the Steubenville High School rape case.

ROLL RED ROLL (Nancy Schwartzman, U.S.). 80 minutes. Rating: NNN

Barely anyone knew about Steubenville, Ohio, until a rape case involving the town's high school football players and an intoxicated teenage girl made national headlines in 2012. **Nancy Schwartzman's** gripping, swift film documents the unique way the story broke, the town's divided reaction and the ensuing trial, which ended in the conviction of two offenders.

Schwartzman initially has trouble organizing the material (there are no interviews with the offenders or the Jane Doe victim), but she's helped by police interrogation videos and the work of blogger **Alex Goddard**, whose screencaps of later deleted social media posts among the witnesses and suspects provided key evidence for the investigators. (Goddard soon became the victim of cyber threats.)

A bigger doc could be made about how small town sports worship feeds into rape culture. And some things aren't followed up – for instance, the fact that one of the convicted offenders is now back playing ball.

What Schwartzman does well is show how this case inspired generations of women to reveal their own histories of abuse, something that is urgent and necessary in the #MeToo era.

Apr 30, 6:45 pm, Hart House; May 2, 1 pm, Scotiabank 4; May 6, 3:15 pm, Hart House
<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-roll-red-roll/>

‘Active Measures’ Film Review: How Putin’s Tactics Stole Russia, and How They’re Corrupting the USA

Hot Docs 2018: Hillary Clinton and other experts detail Putin’s chicanery — and Trump’s refusal to push back against it

Todd Gilchrist | April 30, 2018 @ 7:50 PM

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<https://www.thewrap.com/active-measures-film-review-trump-putin-clinton/>

Estreno mundial en Toronto de documental “Mamacita”

Notimex 30.04.2018 - 15:41h

— El director mexicano José Pablo Estrada Torrescano vino a Toronto al estreno mundial de su documental “Mamacita” dedicado a su abuela María del Carmen Torrescano, quien vivió una infancia difícil y...

— El director mexicano José Pablo Estrada Torrescano vino a Toronto al estreno mundial de su documental “Mamacita” dedicado a su abuela María del Carmen Torrescano, quien vivió una infancia difícil y gracias a un negocio exitoso sacó adelante a sus ocho hijos.

En entrevista con Notimex horas antes de la primera proyección de tres que tendrá en el festival internacional de documentales Hot Docs, el joven director, quien radica en Alemania, explicó por qué decidió regresar de Praga donde estudiaba cine para hacer una película de su abuela.

“Su dura infancia le dio el poder para salir adelante y triunfar con sus lociones y cremas de belleza. Ella narró su historia en un libro autobiográfico, “Mi vida”, pero siempre quiso que su nieto llevara a la pantalla su historia y cumplí mi promesa”.

María del Carmen Torrescano, quien cumplirá cien años el próximo diciembre, es hija de dos medios hermanos, por lo que fue rechazada dentro del seno familiar, liderado por un general súper católico.

“El haber hecho esta película me cambió la vida porque aprendí cosas de mi familia que no sabía, como detalles de la muerte de mi madre que me dejó huérfano a los 13 años. Me di cuenta que tengo similitudes con mi abuela, así como ella fue abandonada yo también me sentí algo abandonado”, explicó el director.

Sin su madre y con un padre ausente José Pablo fue cuidado por sus hermanos de 16 y 18 años.

A sus 99 años la abuela Torrescano lleva auestas el orgullo de haber emprendido un negocio exitoso con clínicas de belleza que dieron sustento a sus ocho hijos. El lujo de sus joyas no puede ocultar la opacidad que siente al recordar que es hija de dos medios hermanos, aunque levanta la frente y dice “esas cosas pasan”.

María del Carmen curaba gente con hipnosis, creó una pócima que ella misma se la tomaba, fue pionera de espiritualidad como yoga, control mental, meditación, creó cremas y las hacía en un laboratorio improvisado en su casa, cantaba muy bien y su voz se escuchó en la radio XEW, recuerda el nieto.

20 minutos – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

En el documental José Pablo le da una sorpresa para preparar a su longeva abuela a “morir en paz”.

La abuela ya vio la película aunque su vejez casi centenaria le impide a veces reconocer su imagen en la pantalla, pero está “muy feliz de tener una película sobre ella”, dijo Estrada.

“Quería llevar a la gente a comprender la historia de Mamacita, que viera su lado humano, no era una propaganda de la abuela, sino como lo que es, porque si sólo muestras una cara, eso es propaganda. La idea de la película es que hay que aprender a perdonar, aceptar y dejar ir las cosas, porque si seguimos cargando las cosas del pasado que nos hicieron daño estamos cegados”.

Del estreno mundial de su película en el festival Hot Docs de Toronto, que junto con el festival IDFA de Amsterdam son los más grandes del mundo, Estrada se dijo muy honrado y agradeció el apoyo porque “éste será como un sello de garantía para la próxima presentación en Munich, Alemania, y buscaremos presentarla en México este año”.

“Mamacita” forma parte de la sección Made in Mexico, que integra la programación de más de 200 documentales de todo el mundo, donde también se están proyectando las producciones mexicanas Rush hour, Ya me voy, Witkin & Witkin, Artemio y No sucumbió la eternidad.

El festival Hot Docs se realizará en varios cines de Toronto del 26 de abril al 6 de mayo y atrae a unos 200 mil espectadores.

The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret Directed by Barry Avrich

By Kevin Scott

Published Apr 30, 2018

Canadian documentarian Barry Avrich has history with Harvey Weinstein. In 2011, he made *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project*, a profile of the upstart producer that painted him as a man with some character flaws, but was undeniably a genius in his field. There was no mention of the sexual assaults we know now were going on behind closed doors. Regardless, Weinstein tried to shut the film down. Avrich understandably wanted another chance at Weinstein after news of his sexual assault scandal broke, and one can't help but wonder if Avrich perhaps also didn't want to atone in some way for what he missed the first time around.

In the ever-changing wake of the Me Too movement, where new accusations and prevailing opinions about what to do about them are surfacing regularly, Avrich's documentary *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* doesn't exactly break any new ground. But as an overview of Hollywood's history of sexually abusing women, the documentary does serve to contextualize recent events and offers a balanced perspective on the challenges facing the movement going forward.

Kicking off in the days following Weinstein's exile from Hollywood, the documentary's opening passages detail the allegations that brought him and his company down. An interview with actress Melissa Sagemiller, who recalls how Weinstein's frequent set visits on the teen film *Get Over It* eventually led to her being propositioned by Weinstein behind closed doors, underscores the emotional impact of his transgressions. There's an interesting section that delves into the history of the casting couch and illustrates how this sort of thing has been around a lot longer than you might think.

From there, the documentary segues into the many other public figures that have been accused of some sort of misdeed in recent days. This means, for instance, hearing all about the many years director James Toback (who even made a movie starring Robert Downey Jr. called *The Pick-Up Artist*) spent preying on women, luring them in with promises of a starring role in one of his films only to then be faced with the unfortunate reality of having their leg humped by him. We also get time on the scandals involving Louis C.K., Aziz Ansari and Trump.

While some of the documentary's clips — including TMZ-style snippets of a disheveled Weinstein and various actors on talk shows discussing the movement — can come across at times as nothing more than a well-curated Youtube playlist on the subject, at least the interviews provide some insights. If you're going to discuss the Woody Allen allegations, it obviously helps to have his accuser Dylan Farrow on camera, just as it's necessary to hear from all of the other victims interviewed here, though the opinions of someone like columnist Margaret Wente can already be found elsewhere or, better yet, not at all.

Exclaim! – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

In fact, the stories and surrounding discussion have become so prevalent in our culture that it's worth wondering if any of this will really be all that new or noteworthy to a world that is already immersed in the subject. Of course, if it makes Avrich feel better that he's finally able to unveil the awful truth about his proverbial white whale, then at least he's achieved something. If only he could have known years ago. It would have made for a far more incendiary and important documentary than it does now. (Melbar)

https://exclaim.ca/film/article/the_reckoning_hollywoods_worst_kept_secret-directed_by_barry_avrich

Hot Docs Review: Mr SOUL! (2018, Sam Pollard, Melissa Haizlip)

Opening up with some archival footage of ads heralding the arrival of colour TV, Mr. SOUL! quickly makes the point that, while everything on TV could now be presented in full glorious colour, the programming itself was still overwhelmingly pretty white. The answer to this: SOUL!

Mr. SOUL! tells the story of the first black arts and culture program to be aired on American television. SOUL! was the brainchild of Ellis Haizlip, his singular vision being to provide a platform for black voices, voices that had not really been given much space on the airwaves up until that time. Originating from New York public broadcaster WNET and airing from 1968 – 1973, SOUL! seemed to consistently challenge itself and its audience from the get-go. Determined not to be just like any other TV show, Haizlip and his team at SOUL! tooled with the formula for awhile before ultimately deciding to just let Haizlip himself host the show.

Airing live much of the time, SOUL! presented many impressive musical performances – everyone from The Lost Poets to Ashford & Simpson to Stevie Wonder to Al Green. Along with many established big name performers, so many musicians were given their first chance on this show, many of them also being acts who wouldn't have had a chance of being booked on a more mainstream program. One of my favourite stories from the film is Haizlip's apparent answer upon being asked why he had booked avant-garde jazz saxophonist Rahsaan Roland Kirk on the show: "Because he's crazy." It's true – dude played like three saxes at once. Impressive.

In addition to music, poetry and dance were given equal footing on the show as well as political and cultural discussions – one episode, impressively enough, was just an hour of conversation between James Baldwin and poet Nikki Giovanni filmed in London, England since Baldwin had no interest in returning to America to do an interview. Oh, and also the show featured a 13 year old Arsenio Hall. Was he funny? Who knows – they didn't really show any footage of him. Still, kinda cool.

Mr. SOUL! presents a loving portrait of a show that was gone all too soon. SOUL! may have been around for only a few years, but in that time, it certainly made an impact.

Screenings:

Sat, May 5, 6:00 PM @ Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Be Sociable, Share!

<http://www.panicmanual.com/2018/04/30/hot-docs-review-mr-soul-2018-sam-pollard-melissa-haizlip/>

“United Skates” takes Tribeca ’18 Audience Award

By Daniele Alcinii

April 30, 2018



Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown’s *United Skates* has been honored with the Tribeca Film Festival’s Audience Award for documentary.

The 90-minute film paints a detailed portrait of the African-American roller-rink scene across the U.S., which has fostered community and played host to performances by groundbreaking hip-hop artists, including N.W.A. and Queen Latifah. As America’s roller rinks begin to shutter, the film explores the art, culture and history of several from Los Angeles, Chicago, North Carolina, and beyond. The award came with a US\$10,000 cash award.

United Skates (pictured) held its world premiere at Tribeca as part of the New York-set festival’s Documentary Competition program. It is also screening at the Hot Docs conference and festival in Toronto.

“It was such an honor to have our world premiere at Tribeca this year – and now to win the audience award? Every one of those votes is like a vote for keeping this skate world alive and its rinks open,” said *United Skates* directors Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown in a joint statement. “There is no greater feeling than knowing that audiences are falling in love with this community, the same way we have.”

Realscreen – April 30, 2018 (2 of 2)

The runner-up in the documentary Audience Award category was Jeff Zimbalist and Michael Zimbalist's *Momentum Generation*. The film profiles a band of teen surfers in Oahu during the 1990s that brought the world of professional surfing to new heights.

The festival **last week presented its juried award winners**, with Gabrielle Brady's debut feature *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* and Dava Whisenant's *Bathtubs Over Broadway* taking top doc prizes.

The 17th annual Tribeca Film Festival ran from April 18 to 29.

<http://realscreen.com/2018/04/30/united-skates-takes-tribeca-18-audience-award/>

Harvey Weinstein #MeToo doc getting its world premiere in Toronto

The Hollywood scandal that sparked a torrent of revelations about sexual harassment, gender inequality, and abuse of power in the entertainment industry will be explored at length next month in Toronto.

Hot Docs announced on Tuesday that a documentary about famously disgraced film producer and sexual predator Harvey Weinstein has been added to its Special Presentations Program.

Called *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret*, the film is said to detail "not only the personal toll of Weinstein's alleged pathology, but broadens the systemic scale of abuse to the ensuing scandals involving James Toback, Woody Allen and Louis C.K."

Toronto will be hosting the world premiere of this film on Saturday, April 28, when it screens at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, complete with an extended post-screening Q&A featuring "special guest subjects."

No names have been confirmed for the Q&A session, but Hot Docs notes that the film features interviews with insiders, whistleblowers, alleged victims and "divisive Canadian figures" like Jian Ghomeshi lawyer Marie Heinen and outspoken columnist Margaret Wente.

Canadian filmmaker Barry Avrich, who directed this and a previous documentary about the "micro-managing, hair-trigger tempered but ultimately genius" Weinstein will likely be present, along with the film's producer, Melissa Hood.

"In 2010, filmmaker Barry Avrich wrote, directed and produced *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project*," reads a release announcing the film's premiere at Hot Docs.

BlogTO – April 2018 (2 of 2)

"Eight years later, Avrich returns to detail what he didn't know then about the far darker side of the now-disgraced sexual predator."

"The Reckoning opens on a contrite Weinstein packing off to a rehab centre, mere moments before the tectonic plates of an industry would heave open both a cultural zeitgeist and a feminist revolution: the #MeToo movement."

<https://www.blogto.com/film/2018/04/harvey-weinstein-metoo-doc-getting-its-world-premiere-toronto/>

CP24 – May 1, 2018

Bachman screening at Hot Docs

CHECK OUT OUR **LIVE AND INTERACTIVE SCREEN**

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<https://www.cp24.com/video?clipId=1383686>

PLAYBACK – May 1, 2018

Hot Docs unveils \$2M fund for Canadian, international doc makers

The new program, Hot Docs Partners, aims to connect financiers with feature-length projects, with Toronto's Blue Ice Docs signing on as the lead investor.

By Jordan Pinto

May 1, 2018

Hot Docs has unveiled a \$2-million financing initiative aimed at connecting investors with feature-length documentary projects.

The new program, Hot Docs Partners, is for both Canadian and international filmmakers, with Toronto's Blue Ice Docs signing on as the lead investor in the three-year initiative. Blue Ice, which is headed up by Robin Smith, Steven Silver and Neil Tabatznik, has pledged to match investments made by other partners on a project-by-project basis.

Hot Docs' industry team, led by industry programs director Elizabeth Radshaw, will evaluate and recommend projects to financiers based on their specific investment priorities.

"Hot Docs Partners is a further step in the organization's ongoing efforts to open new sources of financial support for documentary filmmakers by bringing them together with private investors," said a press release announcing the new initiative.

Last year, Hot Docs launched its "first look" program, which connected investors with the festival's pitch market Hot Docs Forum and saw \$100,000 awarded to the winning projects. The program returns this year with \$125,000 set to be invested in doc projects.

The financing announcement follows yesterday's news that Hot Docs has partnered with Netflix to launch the **Hot Docs Canadian Storytellers Project**. The initiative aims to create funding and professional-development opportunities for under-represented documentary filmmakers. It will fund between 25 and 40 filmmakers with grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 over five years.

<http://playbackonline.ca/2018/05/01/hot-docs-unveils-2m-fund-for-canadian-international-doc-makers/>

Hot Docs announces CAD \$2m Hot Docs Partners financing initiative

BY JENN SHERMAN MAY 2018



SOURCE: JOSEPH MICHAEL HOWARTH

HOT DOCS FORUM

Hot Docs has announced its CAD \$2M financing initiative Hot Docs Partners, which will connect Canadian and international feature documentary projects with private investors over the next three years.

Toronto-based Blue Ice Docs is the lead investor and has committed to matching investments made by other investors. Hot Docs' industry programmes director Elizabeth Radshaw made the announcement on Tuesday (May 1) at the launch of the Hot Docs Forum.

Hot Docs' industry team, led by Radshaw, will evaluate and recommend projects to Hot Docs Partners investors based on projects' individual needs. Once partnered, Hot Docs will continue to work with the filmmakers throughout production, release, and distribution.

"Launching Hot Docs Partners is an important milestone in Hot Docs' continued evolution as an organization that supports filmmakers," president of Hot Docs Chris McDonald said. "Making documentaries is a challenging career and our filmmakers need all the help we can provide. Matching their projects with a community of doc-loving and socially conscious investors is an exciting new initiative, and we recognise Blue Ice Docs and all Hot Docs Partners participants for their robust vision and support."

"Hot Docs Partners affords us another welcome opportunity to partner with the Hot Docs team to ensure that outstanding, meaningful and entertaining documentaries continue to get made," co-owner and director of Blue Ice Docs Neil Tabatznik added.

Hot Docs Partners is the latest initiative Hot Docs has taken on to connect documentary filmmakers with investment support. Last year, with the launch of the first look programme, private investors attended the Hot Docs Forum and awarded CAD \$100,000 to top pitch

Screen Daily – May 1, 2018 (2 of 2)

projects. The first-look programme will return to the Forum this year with CAD \$125,000 in total prize money for selected projects. Hot Docs runs until May 6.

Netflix teams up with Hot Docs in five-year funding deal

- Written by Kaltrina Bylykbashi
- 01 May 2018 @ 12:53
-

Netflix and Canada's documentary festival and conference, Hot Docs, are unveiling a five-year funding and development initiative for Canadian filmmakers.

The Hot Docs 'Canadian Storytellers Project' will invest in funding and professional development programs for Canadian documentarians who may be indigenous, French-speaking, deaf and/or have a disability, or that are persons of colour.

This will include the support of ten fellowships annually for Hot Docs' Doc Accelerator program for emerging filmmakers. A handful of emerging filmmakers are already being supported via the program with support from Netflix at this year's Hot Docs.

In addition, the 'CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund' will financially support 25-40 independent doc projects from emerging filmmakers over the next five years with grants ranging from C\$10,000 – \$50,000 (£5,000-28,000).

The Doc Fund will accept applications for its first round of funding this autumn.

The news arrives after Netflix made a C\$500m originals deal with the Canadian government to invest in original English and French-language programming over the next five years.

"Netflix and its members around the world are passionate about documentary films and series," said Netflix vice president of original docs and comedy Lisa Nishimura.

"We are thrilled to partner with Hot Docs to support Canadian storytellers. This project will promote opportunities for emerging filmmakers, who offer a diversity of perspectives and connect their unique voices to global audiences."

Realscreen – May 1, 2018

Hot Docs unveils \$2M fund for Canadian, international doc makers

By Jordan Pinto

May 1, 2018

Hot Docs has unveiled a CDN \$2 million financing initiative aimed at connecting investors with feature-length documentary projects.

The new program, Hot Docs Partners, is for both Canadian and international filmmakers, with Toronto's Blue Ice Docs signing on as the lead investor in the three-year initiative. Blue Ice, which is headed up by Robin Smith, Steven Silver and Neil Tabatznik, has pledged to match investments made by other partners on a project-by-project basis.

Hot Docs' industry team, led by industry programs director Elizabeth Radshaw, will evaluate and recommend projects to financiers based on their specific investment priorities.

"Hot Docs Partners is a further step in the organization's ongoing efforts to open new sources of financial support for documentary filmmakers by bringing them together with private investors," said a press release announcing the new initiative.

Last year, Hot Docs launched its "first look" program, which connected investors with the festival's pitch market Hot Docs Forum and saw \$100,000 awarded to the winning projects. The program returns this year with \$125,000 set to be invested in doc projects.

The financing announcement follows the news that **Hot Docs has partnered with Netflix** to launch the Hot Docs Canadian Storytellers Project. The initiative aims to create funding and professional development opportunities for under-represented documentary filmmakers. It will fund between 25 and 40 filmmakers with grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 over five years.

<http://realscreen.com/2018/05/01/hot-docs-unveils-2m-fund-for-canadian-international-doc-makers/>

The Globe and Mail – May 1, 2018

How Barbara Kopple funded her first Oscar-winning documentary

PUBLISHED MAY 1, 2018



American filmmaker Barbara Kopple says gifts and a credit card helped fund her documentary classic Harlan County, USA in the 1970s. Kopple is being honoured by Toronto's Hot Docs film festival.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/video-how-barbara-kopple-funded-her-first-oscar-winning-documentary/>

Mr. Rogers Remains Neighborhood Favourite in Hot Docs Race

Posted on May 1st, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Won't You Be My Neighbor?

By Pat Mullen

The rankings don't lie. Festivalgoers in line-ups and screenings can't stop singing the praises of Morgan Neville's *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*. Doc lovers seem to agree that it's the film everyone needs right now with its message of compassion and community. Moreover, many doc fans defend it as the most quietly political film of the festival as it asks audiences to reflect on the kind of environment one hopes to create for one's neighbors. The film holds the top spot in the Hot Docs Audience Award rankings for the second day in a row.

New to the race is the Mexican doc *Mamacita*, which comes in at #2. Directed by José Pablo Estrada Torrescano, *Mamacita* is the story of a Mexican matriarch who blows her family history wide open in a surprising documentary by her grandson. *Mamacita* bumps *Transformer* down to #3, but the doc about trans bodybuilder Janae Croc still leads the Canadian field with *Laila at the Bridge*, *The Accountant of Auschwitz*, and *This Mountain Life* coming up strong.

Despite a reception that one could only describe as engaged and rapturous, Liz Garbus's *The Fifth Estate*, which takes audiences inside the *New York Times* during the first weeks of Trump's unfortunate presidency, didn't crack the top 20, but has additional screenings to catch up.

The Audience Award rankings for May 1 are:

1. [Won't You Be My Neighbor?](#)
2. *Mamacita*
3. [Transformer](#)

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4. Laila at the Bridge
5. The Accountant of Auschwitz
6. The Game Changers
7. This Mountain Life
8. The Silence of Others
9. Letter from Masanjia
10. Warrior Women
11. Exit Music
12. Mr. Fish: Cartooning From the Deep End
13. Don't Be Nice
14. Grit
15. McQueen
16. Three Identical Strangers
17. Andy Irons: Kissed by God
18. Gurrumul
19. Mr. SOUL!
20. United Skates

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

5 queer films to see at Hot Docs in Toronto

WhatsOn May 01, 2018 by Nathan MacKinnon Toronto.com



Call Her Ganda-Jennifer Altar - Hot Docs/photo

Hot Docs is underway and there are plenty of queer film showings throughout the festival. Choosing which to see can be a daunting task, so here's a list of five queer films you can't miss during the festival.

Call Her Ganda

May 6

Trans woman Jennifer Laude is murdered by a US Marine in the Philippines sparking a national media storm. Three women join forces to ensure something like this can't happen again.



Queercore: How to Punk a Revolution

May 4

In the 1980s, Bruce LaBruce and G.B. Jones invented the Toronto queercore scene. Queercore became a worldwide phenomenon known for challenging mainstream gay and homophobic punk cultures.



Obscuro Barroco

May 2

May 3

May 6

In a tribute to Rio de Janeiro's queer subculture, trans icon Luana Muniz guides us through the city's festive nights. It shows how people can reinvent themselves through the gender-bending power of Carnival.



Love, Scott

May 3

Musician Scott Jones was stabbed twice and had his throat slashed outside a club because he's gay leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. Love, Scott is an intimate look at his transformation.



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Don't Be Nice

May 4

Follow the Bowery Slam Poetry team as they prepare for national championships. Made up of five African-American, Afro-Hispanic queer poets, they're pushed by their demanding coach to write from a place of vulnerability.

Visit Hot Docs Festival for the full lineup.

Hot Docs Giving Away \$200,000 Worth of Tickets to Students, Seniors and New Canadians

By [Aaron Brophy](#) | www.samaritanmag.com

Posted on May 1, 2018



Hot Docs' executive director Brett Hendrie — photo courtesy of Hot Docs.

Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival organizers will be giving \$200,000 worth of tickets to students, seniors and new Canadians. One of the top documentary film festivals in the world, the 2018 edition of Hot Docs started April 26 and runs until May 6.

"Every day, we bring docs to our community and to many who, otherwise, would not be able to attend the festival or visit our cinema," said a joint message from Hot Docs' executive director Brett Hendrie and president Chris McDonald.

A number of partners are helping Hot Docs in this.

Daytime screenings before 5 p.m. are free for students and seniors courtesy of [CBC Docs](#). Interested parties need only show up with valid ID at the screening venue's box office on the day of the screening to obtain tickets, subject to availability. During the festival Hot Docs is also providing free screenings to secondary students at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema and in their classrooms. This is via the fest's own [Docs For Schools](#) program.

Additionally, Hot Docs partners with the [Institute for Canadian Citizens](#) (ICC), a national charity co-founded by The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul dedicated to encouraging active Canadian citizenship; [Culture Link](#), an organization dedicated to integrating newcomers to Canadian society; and the [Toronto Public Library](#), which offers free movie passes in its downtown and branches and in priority neighbourhoods.

"Additionally, we partner with dozens of ethnocultural and communities of interest to co-present screenings and do direct outreach into those communities, which often involves distributing tickets," adds Hot Docs communications director Jonathan Da Silva.

Some of the buzz films at this year's festival include *Of Fathers And Sons*, the story of a war photographer documenting the life of a jihadist family, *Love, Scott*, which follows the story of

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Scott Jones, who was stabbed in a homophobic attack and paralyzed from the waist down, and Matangi/Maya/M.I.A., a look at pop agitator Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam.

"Over the years, we've had the pleasure of sharing remarkable documentaries—tales with the power to engage, inspire and evoke," Hendrie and McDonald's joint statement also read. "In these turbulent times, the real-world experiences chronicled by unwavering filmmakers are imbued with an increased immediacy and meaning. Now, more than ever, we need documentaries that strengthen our connection to the world around us and give voice to truth. As you experience films during the Festival, you may feel the urge to do more. We feel the same, which is why we share these stories with audiences throughout the year."

Hot Docs is accepting donations for those interested in paying it forward and getting more people the opportunity to screen their films.

<https://www.samaritanmag.com/news/hot-docs-giving-away-200000-worth-tickets-students-seniors-and-new-canadians>

Is This the Documentary That Can Take Down Trump?

How Jack Bryan parlayed rich-kid know-how into *Active Measures*, the very first feature-length doc about Trump and Russia.

BY TOM ROSTON

May 1, 2018 7:42 am

Jack Bryan was your average Upper East Side-raised son of a millionaire trying to get his filmmaking career started when **Donald Trump** began persistently popping up in his life. In New York City's social circuit, Bryan's father, **Shelby Bryan**—a telecom mogul and Democratic donor—was friendly enough with Trump, perhaps because both are relative outsiders (Bryan being from Texas, and Trump being Trump). On vacation in Palm Beach in 2008, the Bryan family was immersed in the scuttlebutt about how a then financially strapped Trump had curiously managed to sell a Palm Beach estate he'd bought for \$41 million to Russian oligarch **Dmitry Rybolovlev** for \$95 million. Around 2012, Shelby Bryan shared a car to the U.S. Open with the real-estate tycoon, after which he told his son, "That guy sure does like Russia." The elder Bryan (who is also the longtime partner of Condé Nast's artistic director, **Anna Wintour**) also brought his sons, Jack and **Austin**, on a golfing trip to the United Kingdom, where Trump gave them early access to his Trump International Golf Links course in Scotland and chatted with them after their game.

To Jack, Trump registered as a "harmless clown who would appear in the tabloids." But as Trump's political ambitions solidified, the younger Bryan began to take notice. A self-described "pragmatic lefty," he had often texted with his friend and fellow politics junkie **Marley Clements** about world affairs. When Clements proposed that Russians may have been involved in the hacking of the Democratic National Committee during the summer of 2016, Bryan expressed skeptical interest.

Then, in March 2017, former F.B.I. agent **Clint Watts** testified to the Senate Intelligence Committee that Trump himself had engaged in "active measures"—a term that describes the Russian propaganda tactic of using disinformation and manipulation of events to promote its foreign policy. That's when Bryan said to Clements, "Somebody needs to make a film about this."

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Active Measures, a dizzying and rigorously researched documentary, premieres at Toronto's Hot Docs film festival this week, where C.A.A. is representing the film in its hunt for a distributor. It is 33-year-old Jack Bryan's effort to connect the dots between Trump and Russia, including **Vladimir Putin** himself. "I want to alert people, and I knew no one else was going to do it in time for the midterm elections," he said over beers at Williamsburg's Radegast Hall recently. "I felt like I could."

The story of Jack Bryan smacks like fiction. He's an oddball rich kid, the vulnerable, good-looking scion of a well-connected Manhattan family, who got thrust into radically different circumstances when he used the powers at his disposal—filmmaking and access to friends-and-family financing—to realize the solemn words his father once said to him: "You are going to have advantages, and that means two things: you won't have any excuses, and you will also have a responsibility to be of service."

Bryan wrote his first film when he was 16—a fictional piece involving a kidnapping—and took classes at the New York Film Academy. His schooling included stops at Buckley School and the Kent boarding school in Connecticut, from which he dropped out before attending rehab (he said he had depression issues). He finished high school at Montana Academy, a self-described "therapeutic school." After arriving home to New York to study media and film at the New School at the age of 23, Bryan made a documentary about the seedy, beloved Siberia Bar, landed a job at a production company, and directed two micro-budget indie dramas, one of which had a minor theatrical release in 2015. (*The New York Times* called it a "mere genre exercise.")

He was in pre-production on another small narrative film, this one a 24-hours-in-New-York-wild-ride drama, when he decided to pivot to *Active Measures*. The filmmaker moved to a friend's house in Maryland—he called it "the bunker"—where he and Clements spent several weeks studying the evidence, scrawling their ideas on window glass and large sections of cardboard to help envision the web they were trying to connect. Also on the team was **Laura DuBois**, Bryan's girlfriend and an experienced producer, whom Bryan calls "the boss of the movie."

Bryan said that the thesis and main points of *Active Measures* haven't changed much since they first sketched it out in the bunker—it's just that their once apparently too-ludicrous-to-be-real collusion narrative has become more plausible. Audiences will see this in the film's highlighted news clips and in-depth interviews with respected world leaders, think-tank wonks, former C.I.A.

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and State Department officials, academics, and Capitol Hill veterans, including Senator **John McCain** and former Democratic presidential nominee **Hillary Clinton**—who provides insight into Putin’s psyche, including a wry aside about the Russian leader’s tendency to manspread.

After a second beer at Radegast, Bryan was off to his apartment to review post-production on the film. Eventually, more accomplished documentarians will have Trump stories to tell.

(**Michael Moore** is currently wrangling a release for his own big Trump film, *Fahrenheit 11/9*, which is currently stalled because of the Weinstein Company’s implosion.) But for now, Bryan is happy to be in front of the pack. “Until the cavalry comes, people need to know what’s going on,” Bryan said, brushing away the hair falling on his forehead. “Until the pros show up, I’m what you’ve got.”

CORRECTION: A previous version of this post incorrectly stated that Donald Trump was an alum of Buckley School.

Playing Hard lifts the lid on the stressful birth of a big-budget video game

By NEIL DAVIDSON The Canadian Press
Tues., May 1, 2018

From his office two blocks away, filmmaker Jean-Simon Chartier watched Ubisoft's Montreal video game studio grow from a few hundred people to more than 3,000.

And he saw the explosive worldwide growth of the gaming industry.

So Chartier decided to "get inside this fortress and find a story to tell." He came up with *Playing Hard*, the story behind the creation of Ubisoft's fighting game *For Honor*. The 90-minute film has its world premiere Wednesday at Toronto's Hot Docs festival.

Playing Hard offers a rare peak under the video game hood, following Ubisoft Montreal creative director Jason VandenBerghe, producer Stephane Cardin and brand manager Luc Duchaine over four years as their production team on the game grew from fewer than 40 to more than 500.

It documents the stresses of making a so-called triple-A big-budget title, from the bottom-line demands of corporate headquarters in Paris to the pressure of delivering the game on time.

There is drama inside and outside *For Honor*, which offers gamers the chance to fight as knights, Vikings and samurai in a world whose "hardy inhabitants eke a living as they can in spite of living in a state of near perpetual war."

After convincing Ubisoft to let him shoot behind the scenes, Chartier was given the boot eight months into the project with the studio saying some people were uncomfortable by his presence. It took six months to get back inside.

"It was a lot of discussion and developing a trust, relationship with the main characters," said the 44-year-old Chartier. "They were the ones that helped me with top management."

Chartier had his own problems, shooting for 2 1/2 years without financing.

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“But I was willing to take the risk because I was expecting something to happen,” he said.

He anticipated drama, given the pressures of producing the game. Also stress, conflict and passion.

“They were all things I was looking for,” he said.

Chartier, whose gaming experience was limited to time spent playing *Super Mario Bros.* and *Donkey Kong* years ago, was more interested in the emotions stirred up in making the game than the game itself.

The stress takes its toll on all three protagonists with the film showing them criss-crossing the globe to showcase the game and try to create buzz for its release date.

VandenBerghe is the tortured visionary who has spent years trying to take the game from inside his head to the consumer. Cardin is the quarterback and quartermaster, tasked with meeting deadlines and satisfying head office. Duchaine is the meticulous marketer, trying to sell the project while agonizing over the time spent away from his family.

VandenBerghe is shown during the credits, dressed in black getting ready for battle.

He might as well be a knight, with jewelry replacing chain mail. He starts by putting on nine rings then an assortment of bracelets before ensuring his long hair is tied up correctly.

“Do you want to keep this 5 o’clock shadowy-thing going?” asks a stylist before a TV appearance later in the film.

“It’s part of the look,” he responds. “This is just what I am. Melodramatic. It’s just the deal.”

Chartier calls VandenBerghe “a complex person.” He gives the game’s visionary lots of face time in the film, often shooting him alone in the wilderness while VandenBerghe offers up his world vision.

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“Physically he looks like a warrior. He looks like a game character,” said Chartier. “He’s a philosopher. He’s anxious. He’s really, really compelling and you feel that after you spend a few days with him.

“I was expecting something to happen with this guy.”

It does as the film takes an unexpected twist.

Ubisoft had no say in the final product and Chartier says he has yet to hear their thoughts on the project. He says Cardin and Duchaine both thought the film was true to their story.

As for Chartier, he intends to buy a console to get some more hands-on time on video gaming.

“But that’s not where I started (this project),” he said. “I started this because I see people around me that are transforming the whole entertainment industry and actually the whole world we live in. And it’s two blocks away.

“I was an opportunist, trying to get into this fortress. But I mean as a human being, as a filmmaker, I’m interested in many many topics. Gaming has become one of them.”

He eventually got some financing from Tele-Quebec for a three-part series on video gaming, combining that with his work on “Playing Hard.”

Prior to filmmaking, Chartier spent 3 1/2 years in advertising. But his life changed when he took nine months off to backpack around Latin America.

“As cliched as it might be, it really opened me to other realities,” he said.

He started writing stories about his travels, sharing them with friends and colleagues via email. People liked them

“I discovered that I could tell stories,” he said.

He went to Asia with a camera, looking to expand that story-telling. The project never came off so he returned to advertising, but making documentaries had become his passion.

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“It took me more than 10 years before the first one was finally (done), the first real one,” he said.
“Then I started my own company — little company.”

Chartier, whose company is MC2 Communication Media, has made TV documentaries that include looks at the Burning Man Art festival in Nevada (*Encountering Burning Man*), cosmetic surgery (*Body a La Carte*), Dominican monks (*Alleluia*), motivational speakers (*Marchands de Bonheur*) and a young actress/musician’s journey as she ponders whether to join a religious order (*Sister Violaine*).

Playing Hard is his first feature documentary as a director.

He hopes to find more avenues to showcase the film after Hot Docs, with a digital release slated for the end of the year.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/04/30/playing-hard-lifts-the-lid-on-the-stressful-birth-of-a-big-budget-video-game.html>

Famously humble clowns Bill Murray and Gilda Radner get a loving Hot Docs moment

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic
Tues., May 1, 2018



Bill Murray in *The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man*. (VIA HOT DOCS)

Early cast members of *Saturday Night Live* had humility baked right into their troupe name: The Not Ready For Prime Time Players.

It was a send-up of showbiz pretensions and a signal of their determination to make a splash in comedy while remaining in touch with regular folks. They meant it, too, looking askance at Chevy Chase when he bolted *SNL* after its debut 1975-76 season to pursue Hollywood stardom.

Bill Murray and the late Gilda Radner, briefly a real-life couple in the early 1970s and also a hilarious nerd duo Todd DiLaMuca and Lisa Loopner on *SNL*, were prime practitioners of this humble-fame approach, which Murray still espouses, even as the world insisted on giving them applause, awards and adoration.

It's evident in two films screening at Hot Docs, the documentary film festival currently underway in Toronto: Tommy Avallone's *The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man* and Lisa D'Apolito's *Love, Gilda*.

The Bill Murray Stories, which has screenings May 2, May 5 and May 6 at Hot Docs, addresses head-on the title subject's amusingly bizarre habit of downplaying his fame while barging into regular lives. Avallone follows up reports, readily available online — search “Bill Murray photobomb” on YouTube — of the comic actor's propensity to delight his many fans by spontaneously joining in on whatever they're doing.

He's popped up in engagement photos, at bachelor parties, birthday bashes and even a White House press briefing, the latter to mock-solemnly make his predictions for World Series success for his beloved Chicago Cubs.

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Murray is happy to do just about anything to help make an event happier: shake a tambourine, serve drinks and even wash dishes. Avallone's film includes clips of many grainy and shaky cellphone videos taken by excited Murray fans, as the star of *Ghostbusters*, *Caddyshack* and *Lost In Translation* — to name just three of his many post-SNL movie hits — suddenly graces them with his presence.

"No one will ever believe you," Murray tells the startled and amused people he's "photobombed," a term that in his case should be enlarged to "memory bombed," one fan suggests, because of how much of an impact Murray makes just by acting like a regular Joe.

Murray, 67, often exits the scene as quickly as he makes it, and he's not inclined — in this movie or elsewhere — to comment on the meaning of his random visits. When a fan at the 2015 Comic-Con asks Murray to explain his pop-up encounters, the comic smiles and feigns ignorance: "I don't know what he's talking about," he says to the crowd. "It sounds like fun though, doesn't it?"

He'll leave it to others to analyze his intentions, although it's obvious he simply enjoys being loved. A Texas bartender named Tyler Van Aiken tells Avallone's camera that he figures Murray long ago decided that it would be easier to just embrace his stardom, rather than try to flee from it, as so many celebrities seem to do.

"How crazy would it be if you walked around town and everybody loved you? That would be exhausting," Van Aiken says.

Gilda Radner, who died from ovarian cancer in 1989 at the age of 42, had a more complicated approach to stardom. She was simultaneously enraptured and repelled by it, as *Love, Gilda* makes clear.

Radner grew up in Detroit thinking of herself as homely and fat (she had a lifelong struggle with eating disorders), yet secure in the knowledge that she could make people laugh with her many self-deprecating characters — in her *SNL* years they included such popular creations as language-mangling senior Emily Litella and sassy Latina Roseanne Roseannadanna.

Her brief life included an Emmy win, a hit one-woman show on Broadway and a posthumous Grammy. She also starred in several Hollywood comedies — none of them nearly as successful as Murray's, to her chagrin.

Yet at heart, Radner longed to be just accepted and adored as a regular person.

"My main priority is to be a girl," she writes in her abundant diary notes, revealed in *Love, Gilda*. "I never wanted to be anything else."

But her talent at making people laugh would insist on making her a star, right when she first grabbed public attention as part of the *Godspell* troupe in Toronto, where she would meet Martin Short, a future *SNL* player and briefly a romantic partner.

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Radner was the first cast member hired by *SNL* producer Lorne Michaels for his counterculture TV show. She was arguably the most beloved member of The Not Ready For Prime Time Players during their five-year reign on *SNL* from 1975-80.

Love, Gilda — which has two screenings left at Hot Docs, on May 3 and May 5 — credits her with being the first person to utter the word “bitch” on network TV without being censored, a tribute both to Radner and the popularity of her daffy Litella character, whom she based on her adored childhood nanny.

She’s also apparently the first person to talk openly on network TV about having cancer, which she did on her friend Garry Shandling’s show, a few months before her death. She managed to make fun of a very bad situation, also doing so in her autobiography *It’s Always Something*, titled for a Roseanne Roseannadanna catch phrase.

“My biggest motivation has always been love,” Radner wrote in another of her diary entries, and this humble statement of purpose applies equally to her and Bill Murray.

See hotdocs.ca for screening times and venues.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/analysis/2018/05/01/famously-humble-clowns-bill-murray-and-gilda-radner-get-a-loving-hot-docs-moment.html>

Meet the Designer Behind Rihanna's Meme-Generating Met Gala Cape

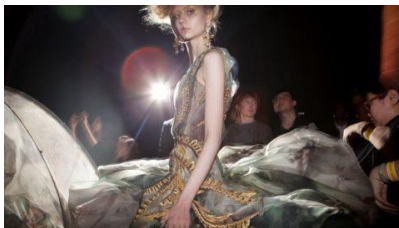
She's the subject of a film screening at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival this year

By Pahull Bains

Date May 1, 2018

Chinese designer Guo Pei may not have even heard of Rihanna until the superstar decided she wanted to wear one of her creations to the Met Gala in 2015 (the year the theme was 'China: Through the Looking Glass'), but she will remain forever indebted to her for imbuing one of her favourite creations—a scene-stealing gold cape—with a second life. In the new documentary *Yellow is Forbidden*, the designer recalls the show in which an overtly nervous model wore the heavy piece down the runway. “Her performance made me sad. Painfully and slowly she finished the runway. The show ruined the dress and I would never have had a chance to make up for it. I'm grateful to [Rihanna] from the bottom of heart.”

The designer, celebrated and applauded in her home country, came to worldwide notice after the Met Gala, prompting documentary filmmaker Pietra Bretkelly to follow her, on and off, for nearly two years for the film *Yellow is Forbidden*. As the film screens at Toronto's Hot Docs Festival this week, we caught up with the director to learn more about her experience chronicling a series of major moments in Guo Pei's life: as she became the first Chinese designer to receive an invitation to become a guest member of the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture (like a Michelin star for fashion, but way, way more elite), her first Paris couture show, and her inclusion in the Time 100 list of Most Influential People in the World.



Photography via Hot Docs

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Most of the world first discovered Guo Pei when Rihanna stepped on to the 2015 Met Gala red carpet in that showstopping gold cape. Were you familiar with her work prior to that moment? What made you decide you wanted to do a documentary film with her as subject?

After completing *A Flickering Truth* [her 2015 documentary set in Afghanistan], I collapsed on my couch and ate feijoa crumble for two weeks (a fruit that appears on our trees in New Zealand every April and May and is something very special). But I was ready to find something female, creative, and once again delve into a language I didn't understand, a practice I love to combine with cinema verite, to see what I can discover across cultures and languages. In this case, I sought to find the essence of this artist.

I had read some years ago of these crazy shoes Guo Pei made, and loved that a small world, a little scene, is carved into the heel. Years later at the supermarket [after the 2015 Met Gala] I read of the Rihanna dress and what struck me was the admission from Guo Pei that she didn't know who Rihanna was. That intrigued me. I found a phone number for her, checked the time difference and dialled. On the third call I got someone who spoke English and though she politely tried to dissuade me, saying that Guo Pei was very private, that I wouldn't get the intimacy I needed for my film, I insisted I come to visit. Three days later my Director of Photography Jake Bryant and I flew to Beijing for a meeting with Guo Pei and her husband and manager Jack Tsao. After an hour of talking, of me being very upfront with the commitment and expectation I have of the subjects when I make a film, of giving them DVDs of our past films and a box of New Zealand chocolates, Guo Pei agreed and we began filming. I said I didn't know how many years it would take. The chocolates sealed the deal.

This was your first time directing a documentary about fashion, and specifically, the very pinnacle of fashion – haute couture. What were some of the things about the industry

that surprised you the most over the course of filming?

I do think there is an assumption the fashion industry is frivolous and superficial. And I was worried I could tell a story that we've seen many times before on television and film. But Guo Pei is an artist—cloth and fashion are her medium but above all she is an artist—and I was relieved as she began to reveal her artistic processes. And that flowed out into the industry—the fact that this was art walking the runway. The level of respect given to Guo Pei, her team and her work was of the level I'd seen with the artists I've profiled over the years including Vanessa Beecroft [in *The Art Star and the Sudanese Twins*, 2008]. These are not off the rack, fast fashion garments and there was a reverence given to them and to her work.



Photography via Hot Docs

I assume you don't speak Mandarin. How does the process of filmmaking change when you can't quite follow conversations exactly as they're unfolding?

For me, I'm interested in people, in 'tribes,' and not fashion per se. In the past I've made films in Dari, Sudanese, Arabic and Maori to name a few; across cultures, religions, gender. It is something I look for and welcome, to be enveloped in words, sentences and sounds I don't know. I love to feel the fear of the unknown, of a different culture and language and then to see what I can gather, what Jake, my exceptional DOP, and I can understand through common human emotions, experiences, reactions. This is part of my filmic practice as I attempt in my

career, within the context of the world's diversities, to show how similar we are, that common human needs, desires and goals transcend language but while also celebrating diversity.

Tell us what made you decide on *Yellow is Forbidden* as the name of the film. What about that anecdote from Guo Pei's childhood—not being allowed to wear bright colours like yellow under Communist rule—struck you the most?

I love an intriguing title and with the Rihanna cape as the trigger for Guo Pei's international explorations, I felt there was something very strong in this line from the lovely scene with her mother. For me it played into the history of China, Guo Pei's personal rebellion against that history—the fact she uses yellow and gold so much in her work—but also the complexities of this woman that she also reflects on the dynasties and the regalness of China's history through her work. There's also something very alluring about saying a colour is forbidden – how could this be, what does this actually mean? I could see myself as a film viewer, reading this title and being drawn to watch such a film to find out the answer.



Photography via Hot Docs

What was the most compelling thing you learned about Guo Pei the person—as opposed to Guo Pei the designer—over the course of filming?

In *Yellow is Forbidden*, Guo Pei goes into the cutthroat world of fashion navigating it with a humility rarely seen in artists and designers. She has a special kind of ego in that sense. She is truly anti-fashion. She is changing the world's perception of China and she's very aware of that. In the world's most famed "cultural city" of Paris people don't even know her name; suspicions

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and misunderstandings abound. For Guo Pei the cultural divide rears its head; she acknowledges in the film that fast fashion is dictating unreasonable terms versus her artistic and traditional vision.

When we first travelled with Guo Pei to Paris for her exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at the Louvre, in the first few days of setting up the exhibition Europeans employed to work with her were asking me to point out the designer as they were used to designers being outspoken, dramatic even, and Guo Pei was not that person. She is quietly rebellious and not rude. She was always gracious and kind to her employees, to the models, and to those she met. But selfishly, the most unexpected thing I learnt about Guo Pei is that [she shares] the singular focus I have in my work, risking so much personally, financially and professionally to make my films, that she too relies immensely on her gut and plays with risk. Getting close to Guo Pei has encouraged me [to see] that I'm not mad or crazy!

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Hind Bensari— “We Could Be Heroes”

BY Beandrea July May 1, 2018

Hind Bensari's first documentary short, “475: Break the Silence,” contributed to a movement in Morocco that succeeded in repealing a law that allowed men accused of rape to marry their victims. She is a Tedx speaker.

“We Could Be Heroes” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 2.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

HB: Set in Morocco, “We Could Be Heroes” tells the story of two disabled friends, Azzedine and Youssef, with extraordinary hopes and dreams to break out of the prison of no opportunity they were put in by conquering the Rio Paralympic Games.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

HB: Azzedine, my main character, intrigued me the second I met him. Something about him commanded respect, despite his humble manners. But it was only when I saw him and Youssef that I knew I had enough there to dedicate the next three years of my life into crafting their story. [I wanted] to tell the desolating effects of discrimination and inequality in my country of origin, Morocco.

Growing up in Morocco, I was always aware of the deep socio-economic divisions that structured our society. The vast gap between rich and poor has only widened over the years, as state institutions kept failing to provide decent public education and healthcare to its citizens. Azzedine and Youssef's dedication, the purity of their affection for each other, and their use of humor to overcome injustice and carry on provided me with a wealth of inspiration to write the story of their incredible journey to conquer what seemed to be an impossible project for outcasts without means: the Rio Paralympic Games.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

HB: I hope that the audience will be inspired by the unique friendship and strong solidarity that my main characters share.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

HB: [Filming in] Morocco was very challenging due to the constant harassment by local authorities and informants who regularly interrupted us while shooting.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

HB: The film was almost exclusively funded by European and Middle Eastern public funds for cinema and the arts, National Television of Morocco (2M) and National Television of Denmark (DR), and NGOs.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

HB: My team and I are very proud to have my first feature film in competition at Hot Docs. Every person involved in making this film put in so much extra time and effort that we all felt very rewarded to be selected by one of the world's most prestigious documentary festivals.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

HB: Best advice: Don't get distracted by reality.

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Worst advice: Just shoot, shoot, shoot, and you'll figure it out eventually.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

HB: Look at people straight in their eyes whenever you are pitching or asking for something,

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

HB: "Mon Roi" ("My King") by Maïwenn because it is a sharply observed, addictive, and poignant depiction of a relationship gone wrong. The film is so well directed that it plays like a documentary.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

HB: It was about time.

Hot Docs 2018 Interview: Director Jean-Simon Chartier works hard for *Playing Hard*

Andrew Parker May 1, 2018 4:41 pm



For his latest documentary, ***Playing Hard*** (which makes its world premiere at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival this week), Canadian filmmaker Jean-Simon Chartier takes a behind the scenes look at creative types with vastly different personalities trying to pull together an ambitious fantasy epic with an enormous budget, hundreds of other employees, and a demanding corporate presence constantly overseeing every minute detail. Only *Playing Hard* isn't about the creation of another *Hobbit*, *Star Wars*, or Marvel film, but rather a documentary looking into the creation of *For Honor*, a video game released by Ubisoft last year with a great deal of buzz and expectation.

While Chartier, by his own admission, isn't much of a video gamer or a producer accustomed working with mega-budgets, but the Montrealer was able to see many humane parallels between *Playing Hard's* core creative figureheads and his own life. *Playing Hard* predominantly follows *For Honor* creator Jason VandenBerghe (a gothically dressed visionary with a big heart and a flair for the dramatic), producer Stéphane Cardin (a family man overseeing most of the day to day technical operations who's on the verge of burning out), and communications specialist Luc Duchaine (as the hard working everyman who gets caught in the middle of any issues that could arise). While Chartier documented *For Honor's* sometimes troubled and fraught production for several years, it was the humanity of the people involved that fascinated the director more than the nuts and bolts construction of the game.

And given the notoriously top secret nature of the video game industry, it's a miracle that Chartier was able to make *Playing Hard* at all. It's amazing that Chartier was able to capture the creation of a completely original game in a market increasingly flooded – much like movie theatres – with sequels, spin-offs, and lucrative adaptations. In the past several years, 85% of all games released are sequels, and only 3% of all games produced by major studios will share 97% of all profits in the marketplace. At any point during the production of the game or the documentary, the plug could have been pulled. A lot was riding on the success of *For Honor* for parent company Ubisoft, and somehow with the help of his core trio of subjects, Chartier was able to document a side of the gaming industry that's never been seen on screen before in this sort of detail.

We caught up with Chartier over the phone from his Montreal offices days before *Playing Hard's* world premiere to talk about the lengthy process of getting the film made in the first place.

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The designing of video games isn't only a hyper-competitive environment as we see in the film, but it's also notoriously guarded and top secret. A lot of technology, story developments, concept art, and things of that nature are kept under lock and key. How were you able to convince a video game company as large as Ubisoft to allow you enough access to film the process of making *For Honor*?



Jean-Simon Chartier

Jean-Simon Chartier: I think it was just my stubbornness. (laughs) Ubisoft Montreal is actually only about three blocks away from my small office. Over the past years, I would see this tribe of designers and programmers essentially taking over the neighborhood. The funny part of this was that my office used to be in another building, but we had to move because Ubisoft decided they needed the space and purchased the offices we were in. (laughs)

But despite that initial curiosity, I wasn't really a gamer at all. I did, however, think that these guys were shaping the industry as we know it. They're the biggest entertainment industry in the world right now. They're bigger than Hollywood.

I managed to get a primary meeting with someone at Ubisoft who was in communications to sort of pitch the idea of making a character driven, human story to understand what kind of roles people played at the highest levels of designing a game. From that initial pitch, they were obviously smiling and nodding at the potential the idea had, but you could tell that these people were used to controlling everything and every little detail that went on in their offices. When someone goes to them with some kind of proposition like the one I had, they have to be asking themselves, "Okay, but what's in it for us?" and "How can we control this?" That's why they usually pay for this kind of stuff, and it's all driven towards creating promotional materials. They edit it and then shape it into something they can use to their benefit. With my pitch, it was a very polite "thanks, but no thanks" answer at first.

But then I returned to it, and I had another meeting with someone else from communications, Luc [Duchaine], who ended up being one of our major characters in the movie. At the time, he was working for Ubisoft on the corporate level. I told him what I wanted to do, and I told him about the work I had done in the past, and he said he'd think about it. That meeting turned into a meeting with him and Stéphane, the game's producer, about the game when it was in its very early stages and when it was being created under a

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different name. They both agreed that I could go out onto their floors as long as I agreed to sign an N.D.A. that would expire at a certain time when I could share what I saw.

I was allowed to go there two or three days a week and shoot, and it was all about building up trust in those early days of shooting. But even then and after eight months of shooting, it still wasn't entirely official that I was going to be able to make the film. Around this time, they sat with me and told me that while my being there was basically a good experience, things weren't going well in the early stages of production. At that point, the crew still wasn't sure if they were even going to be financed by the head office, and some of the people at the money level weren't entirely comfortable with my being there. I was basically asked to leave for a while so they could secure their funding.

From there, it was another eight months before I could return, because by that point I knew the game was going to be funded and officially announced to the public. That led to a whole series of meetings where everyone involved finally agreed to give me my access back. From that moment, I had the green light, and I could shoot for the rest of the game's production. Obviously, there was still an air-tight N.D.A. that I was under while I was shooting. There was no way I could show or share footage of the documentary before the game was released. We had to be very careful about every bit of footage that we had on our side.

So, that's basically the whole story of how this came to be. Our film was always going to be about human relationships because of the amount of trust that Stéphane, Luc, and Jason had in me and what I was doing. After two years of my being there, they completely understood why I wanted to be there and why I wanted to capture these kinds of moments and their individual stories. They were really my partners in this because the head offices for Ubisoft's worldwide corporate offices and their offices here in Montreal never would have agreed to let me do this if they didn't tell everyone else, "Hey, we trust this guy." It would have been impossible without them.

And I think the film is very true to what happened, what everyone went through, and what they felt about it. Luc, Stéphane, and Jason were all the first people to see the finished film – not together – but the three of them all felt that what happened and what they felt was represented on screen. They wouldn't have edited the film in this way, but they all ultimately felt that it was true to their experience. I'm happy with that, and now I'll just be interested to see what the audience thinks. (laughs)



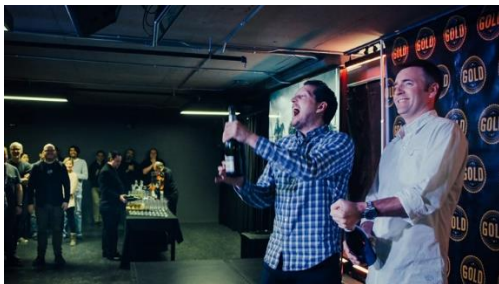
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The film really brings out a lot of the parallels between making a large scale, commercially viable video game and making a major, blockbuster motion picture. Jason definitely acts and reacts like many writer-directors that I have met in my life, and Stéphane acts very much like producers that I have seen on film sets. As a filmmaker, was that something that you wanted to put into a greater context with this film?

Jean-Simon Chartier: Yes, of course. I mean, I know so little about the Hollywood blockbuster film industry considering the films that I work on, so I knew just as little about the sheer amount of effort, staff, technology, and work that went into making something like *For Honor*. (laughs) I knew just as much about both, but being a producer and a director myself, I was always able to project a bit of myself onto Jason and Stéphane and see myself in them. Documentary filmmaking is all about empathy, I think. The first thing that I want to do is to make a story that will appeal to an audience, and to do that, we have to relate to the characters that we're witnessing. We might not always know how they're doing what they're doing, but we should always know why they're doing it, and what it means to them.

I was always pushing them to open up all the way through filming. Stéphane's story was actually very close to mine. I'm a father that's going through a separation, and I have to balance my job knowing that I'll see my son for one week, and then not see him the next. I put a lot of myself into what I'm doing, sometimes to my own detriment, and that was something I saw both in Stéphane and Jason and how it impacted their lives. Their struggles were things that I was and still am going through, and I think the struggles faced by Stéphane and Jason are some that we all wrestle with on different levels. These are very human struggles.

When Jason says he's been pitching this project for ten years and he began worrying if people were starting to think he was crazy, that wasn't just something that mirrored the long story I told about getting the film off the ground, but also something that routinely happens all the time. I only pitched for two and a half years, waited for three years to start shooting, and then shot for another two years. On the creative side, I was definitely immersed in Jason's quest. Also, like Jason, I sometimes have trouble communicating what I'm looking for. (laughs) But I am definitely seeing a lot of myself in these people, and a lot of their personality traits are something I can see a lot of people relating to.



Stéphane Cardin (left, with bottle) celebrates a major milestone in the production of the video game *For Honor* in *Playing Hard*.

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Jason and Stéphane are very different people who sometimes butt heads on both creative and business fronts, but I couldn't help but notice that when they become overwhelmed and they need to step away, they both have their retreats that are basically in the middle of nowhere that they'll visit to recharge. Did you find that to be a curious similarity considering how different their personalities and jobs were?

Jean-Simon Chartier: (laughs) I never picked up on that really before now, but you're right! I think every human being needs to move as far away from pressure and stress as they can at some point in their careers and lives, and sometimes that means going so far away that you either only see your significant other, in the case of Jason, or you just don't want to see anyone else, period, like Stéphane. Again, that's very human. They're so different as people, though. Jason is very much driven by his heart and his emotions, and Stéphane is very much motivated by his mind. But it is great that their ways of coping with extreme stress are somewhat similar.



Jason VandenBerghe speaks about his labour of love, the video game *For Honor*, at the Ubisoft E3 media briefing at the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles in the film *Playing Hard*.

When things start going wrong in the latter stages of the game's development, we're you ever worried that suddenly Ubisoft would come in and pull the plug on your film?

Jean-Simon Chartier: I was stressed out about this from beginning to end, and not just when things were going bad. It was constantly stressful wondering if this enormous corporation was suddenly going to make everything you had been working on for several years completely irrelevant. But at the same time and as I've said, if I came in just a year before the release of the game, and I was there only to watch that, I think my participation still would have come down to the core people involved trusted my being there. But from a corporate standpoint above people like Luc, Jason, and Stéphane, I know I wouldn't have been able to jump in to that final year. I think there was generally a belief that if I got most of the whole picture, there would be context for any problems or disagreements that would arise. But I don't think I would have gotten to follow that final year without being there for the three years before it. But honestly, if you could ask them why I was able to stay until the end, feel free! (laughs) Sometimes, I'm not even sure myself.

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When you're covering the production of something as large in scale as *For Honor* – which employs over 500 people across dozens of countries around the world – is it a challenge to make sure that you're in the right place at the right time?

Jean-Simon Chartier: Oh, yes. It sure was. It was always hours and hours of phone calls to Luc, Stéphane, or other members of the team to find out what was happening every week. Some weeks they would be travelling to the U.S., to Russia, to France, or anywhere else where people were working on it. Sometimes they would decide very late that they would be travelling, and I would have to book a flight pretty much at the last second. There were always some events that I knew I wanted to follow them on that I could prepare for, but most of the time I would just go out on the office floor and sometimes wish that anything would happen. (laughs) There were some days where everyone would be working hard, but none of it would make for an interesting film, but that's like a lot of jobs, I guess. (laughs) Some days I would be running around like mad, some days I wouldn't be doing much of anything, and sometimes I was just in the right place at the right time.

***Playing Hard* screens at Hot Docs on:**

Wednesday, May 2 – 9:15 pm – TIFF Bell Lightbox 2

Thursday, May 3 – 2:45 pm – Scotiabank Theatre 13

Friday, May 4 – 8:15 pm – Scotiabank Theatre 3

Hot Docs '18: Daniel J. Clark delves into the flat Earth community in “Behind the Curve”

By Selina Chignall

May 1, 2018



Director Daniel J. Clark hopes his latest documentary feature film, *Behind the Curve*, will inspire audiences after they've left the theater to be a little more congenial towards those who hold opinions different from their own.

“Instead of writing someone off as evil or dumb, I think people need to be more empathetic and try to figure out why this person believes this,” Clark tells *realscreen*. “It’s not because they’re evil or dumb – it’s what they believe and hold close to their identity.”

Examining one’s beliefs and the nature of belief itself is a natural reaction upon watching Clark’s *Behind the Curve*, a film that looks at the recent phenomena of “flat Earthers”, or those who believe, against all evidence, that the Earth is actually flat. The movement has exploded in the past few years, leaving scientists and educators scrambling to find a way to stem its popularity.

Clark, along with producers Caroline Clark and Nick Andert – also the film’s editor – put the doc together on a shoestring budget in about a year from inception to its debut at this year’s Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

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Ahead of its world premiere at Hot Docs '18, Clark spoke to *realscreen* about what makes the flat Earth community go round, and what he hopes audiences take away from his film.



This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

What was the genesis of *Behind the Curve*?

Nick [Andert] and I have worked on a lot of different documentaries, and we wanted to do our own. It was a year ago, on April 26, when he texted me that he had been on Reddit and saw some flat Earth comments. He said, 'We should do a documentary about flat Earthers. Has anyone done that yet?' We did some research and found no one had. A month and a half later, after doing some research, we brought Caroline [Clark] on board, and we just started shooting.

How did you find the characters?

The flat Earth community is very much an online community. The main hub for flat Earthers is YouTube.

We wanted to focus on the leaders of the movement themselves and the people who were making a lot of content and a splash in the flat Earth community. We knew the [Flat Earth International] conference was coming up in November of last year, so we looked at who was there as a key to who we should be following – the people who are looked up to in the community.

We reached out and said, 'We want to make a documentary about this – we are not flat Earthers – but we want to take a snapshot of this phenomenon that seems to be growing.'



Do you have a distribution deal in place for the film?

We are currently looking for sales reps and talking to people. We had a few distributors reach out to us, but nothing is set.

What production challenges did you encounter on *Behind the Curve*?

The most challenging thing was that we had no budget. A lot of the times, it was me going out with a camera and some audio equipment and just filming. It's why the film looks and feels the way it does – because I was there by myself.

Honestly, I think it was the best way. It was just me – a personal connection – not me coming in with a crew.

Did you feel the need to debunk the flat Earthers' views on screen?

We decided early on we needed some angle on it that was not just following them around because that could give a false sense that what they were saying was valid. I thought we needed to bring in an outside view to quickly say that what they are saying is not true.

We wanted to have expert opinion to highlight what we wanted to do – that 99.9% of people can agree that the Earth isn't flat, yet these people believe it. I hope that we can take that and look at other things that aren't as black and white that people have personal attachments to and really strong feelings about.

There are a lot of things people hold dear to themselves and their identity like these flat Earthers do and hopefully by watching this movie – having a conversation about it –

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maybe you can shed some light on are my beliefs actually valid? Or is this something I want to believe and I identify with and don't want to lose.

- **Behind the Curve** *held its world premiere on April 30th and next screens May 2 at 1 p.m. ET/PT at Toronto's TIFF Bell Lightbox 1.*

<http://realscreen.com/2018/05/01/hot-docs-18-daniel-j-clark-delves-into-the-flat-earth-community-in-behind-the-curve/>

Hot Docs Interview: 'Playing Hard' Writer/Director Jean-Simon Chartier on the Human Story Behind the Video Game 'For Honor'

MAY 1, 2018 BEN MK



When you think "making of a video game," you might think of the technical wizardry and next-gen

computational intensity involved in bringing the multitude of polygons and pixels to life at 60 frames per second. That, however, is not what *Playing Hard* is about.

On the contrary, writer/director Jean-Simon Chartier's documentary about the five years game creator Jason Vandenberghe and the development team at Ubisoft Montreal spent making the game is about so much more — it's a tale of the blood, sweat and real-life human drama that went into turning *For Honor* from a lifelong dream project into a critically acclaimed original IP.

Playing Hard makes its world premiere at the 25th annual Hot Docs Film Festival, and I spoke with Chartier to go in-depth about the making of this compelling documentary, and to find out more about the parallels between the world of filmmaking and the video game industry.

Are you a big gamer yourself? What made you want to make this film?

Chartier: No, I'm not a gamer at all. Actually, my company — MC2, a small production company — is two blocks away from Ubisoft Montreal, so over the past years I saw this kind of tribe of programmers [and] designers taking over all the restaurants and cafes and bars in the Mile End, where we're located. They actually grew from a few hundred to more than 3,000. Today, Ubisoft Montreal is the biggest studio in the world.

And so as this evolution was happening in my neighborhood, it was also taking place in the entertainment industry, gaming having become bigger than Hollywood. So I just thought I needed to find my way into this fortress and find a story to tell. And I managed

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to have a first meeting with someone at communication, and I pitched the project that I was planning to do. I was looking for strong characters to tell a story of what is it to create a game, and I wanted to tell a story about passion, about all of this. And they thought I was really enthusiastic, but they said, "Thanks, but no thanks."

And then I managed to have another meeting with someone else at communication through someone I knew, and this person was Luc [Duchaine], actually, that you saw in the documentary, who became the brand manager of *Hero*, [the original title of *For Honor*] at the time. And the shift on this side was happening, and he told me, "Come back and see me next week, and I'm going to introduce you to Stéphane [Cardin], the producer, and we'll see from there."

So that's what happened. I met with Jason, and he agreed to have me on their floor. There were 40 people at this time. So I was there for 8 months shooting, but after 8 months' time, they told me, "Alright, we're now bigger, we don't know if this is going to happen, but we're under pressure. And some people are not comfortable with you being there." So I had to stop shooting, and it took me another 8 months before I was able to go back on the floor. So that's a bit of the genesis of the project.

When you're making a documentary like this, do you have an idea of the film you're going to make, or do you have to be more like a journalist, and follow where the story takes you?

Chartier: Yeah, I knew after a few days of shooting that Jason was this kind of character that was bold and complex enough so that he could carry a story. I didn't know what story it would be, but I knew I had a very, very strong character. I felt that with Jason, but I also felt that with Stéphane, and the fact that his last game was a failure. He had worked for two years on this game, and the company pulled the plug. And Luc, his character as well. So I knew I had some good characters.

And I felt that it was a question of instinct, and also luck, obviously. [laughs] 'Cause I didn't know that at the end there would be so much pressure and conflict that things would evolve such as would happen. But then I had to provoke things and act as a journalist, as you said, so that Jason would open [up] to me and tell me what was on his mind, and what he felt, and what was happening. And I did the same with Stéphane, and I managed to get the real thing and the emotions. But I think it was the relation of trust that grew over the time, that enabled me to tell the story.

'Cause if I would have come, let's say, one year before the release and not having this kind of close relationship and trust with my main characters, they would have kicked me out. But then we worked three years in this together, so they were willing to go all the way.

Speaking of the game's creator, Jason Vandenberghe, the film is as much a deep dive into his psyche as it is a look at the behind-the-scenes human drama of its creation. Can you tell me more about Jason, and perhaps what you learned from each other over the course of making this documentary?

Chartier: Yes, we talked all the way when the camera was not rolling, and it was the same with Jason, it was the same with Stéphane as well, where they were also asking me questions about why I was doing this and why I was kind of still

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doing this after 2 years with no financing, and what kind of struggle I was going through, and what was happening in my family as well. So it was a

two-way conversation, and actually, that's one of the reasons why they, as I said before, were willing to move forward with me. 'Cause they knew a bit about what was happening on my side, and I saw myself in Stéphane, and I saw myself in Jason as well. All my flaws, and the struggle with being a single dad on my end.

So I think it's one of the reasons why they allowed me to carry on, and it's one of the reasons why I wanted to carry on myself, 'cause it was a bit of my story in there.

The film brings to light some of the parallels between creating a film and creating a game. As a filmmaker, what stood out to you the most?

Chartier: I think the main parallel is passion and believing in something that's kind of bigger than yourself, and trying to have some light on you. It's a bit about ego as well — they have strong egos, we have strong egos when we do a film. We were doing it because we believe that an audience would connect with what we do. So I think a lot of motivations are coming from the same dreams and probably some failures we have in the past.

I'm working with a three-person crew when I'm shooting, and then I'm in the editing room with my editor alone for 16 weeks. Doing a documentary is a very lonely process [laughs] and the stakes are obviously not comparable to what they're doing when they become 500 people and they have to make millions, otherwise they won't make any money. So the stakes are completely different, but the pressure we put on ourselves is very comparable.

I mean, it's my own company, I'm the producer/director. And when I do a film like this, I'm not doing other stuff. So I need to believe that it's gonna connect with an audience and that I'm gonna be able to sell it. And they have to believe in the same thing.

You mentioned that you're not a gamer, but did you have any preconceptions about the video game industry that were challenged, or perhaps shattered, by what you learned making this documentary?

Chartier: I was able to notice that creating such a big game, that managing part of this — having like 100 people working on very, very specific items, and this becoming a whole — this struck me. I couldn't believe there was so much technology management [and] human resources involved in creating something like this. I wouldn't have been able to understand that prior to witnessing it. But even if I spent that amount of time witnessing it, I got a grasp of it, but I wasn't doing a making-of, like a gaming documentary. I was interested in the heart and the passion, the emotion — the gaming industry and the game itself was the context to tell a story that was more human.

There's a moment in the doc where Jason says, "Entertainment is philosophy in motion." Essentially, he's saying that we learn about the world around us from movies, books and games. Does that sort of encapsulate why you became a documentary filmmaker?

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Chartier: [laughs] I think Jason is much more intelligent and interesting than I am. And I think he spends a lot of time thinking about why he is doing things. He's a speaker, he thinks about the psychology of gaming, so these kinds of answers that he's able

to provide us are much more profound than what I could answer myself, as to why I'm doing what I'm doing.

But actually, the simple answer to why I'm doing documentaries [is] I am really touched by the authenticity and the genuineness of the people. And I'm trying to find a way to be more authentic myself, and I think being able to tell some stories with authentic people, this brings me further to what I want to become. That's my philosophical way of explaining why I do this. 'Cause I'm not more interested in gaming than I'm interested in religion or any other topics, but I'm interested in the human being.

You also have another film coming out, called *Body À La Carte*. Can you briefly tell me more about that one?

Chartier: Yeah, it's a documentary about our relationship to body modification, so basically I'm following different characters that are going through the process, or went through the process, of plastic surgery, to kind of become more themselves. So it's completely non-judgmental, and it's a TV documentary. It's going to be released in January of 2019 on Radio-Canada, the French network for CBC.

***Playing Hard* screens Wednesday, May 2nd, Thursday, May 3rd and Friday, May 4th at Hot Docs. Its runtime is 1 hr. 30 min.**

<http://www.thereelroundup.com/2018/05/jean-simon-chartier-playing-hard-interview.html>

Going behind scenes of the big-budget video game

Playing Hard captures the pressures and drama of Ubisoft's For Honor

From his office two blocks away, filmmaker Jean-Simon Chartier watched Ubisoft's Montreal video game studio grow from a few hundred people to more than 3,000.

And he saw the explosive worldwide growth of the gaming industry.

So Chartier decided to "get inside this fortress and find a story to tell." He came up with

Playing Hard, the story behind the creation of Ubisoft's fighting game For Honor. The 90minute film has its world premiere Wednesday at Toronto's Hot Docs festival.

Playing Hard offers a rare peak under the video game hood, following Ubisoft Montreal creative director Jason Vanden Berghe, producer Stephane Cardin and brand manager Luc Duchaine over four years as their production team on the game grew from fewer than 40 to more than 500.

It documents the stresses of making a so-called triple-A bigbudget title, from the bottomline demands of corporate headquarters in Paris to delivering the game on time.

There is drama inside and outside For Honor, which offers gamers the chance to fight as knights, Vikings and samurai in a world whose "hardy inhabitants eke a living as they can in spite of living in a state of near perpetual war."

After convincing Ubisoft to let him shoot behind the scenes, Chartier was given the boot eight months into the project with the studio saying some people were uncomfortable by his presence. It took six months to get back inside.

"It was a lot of discussion and developing a trust, relationship with the main characters," the 44-year-old Chartier said. "They were the ones that helped me with top management."

Chartier had his own problems, shooting for two-and-a-half years without financing.

"But I was willing to take the risk because I was expecting something to happen," he said.

He anticipated drama, given the pressures of producing the game. Also stress, conflict and passion.

"They were all things I was looking for," he said.

Chartier, whose gaming experience was limited to time spent playing Super Mario Bros. and Donkey Kong years ago, was more interested in the emotions stirred up in making the game than the game itself.

The stress takes its toll on all three protagonists with the film showing them criss-crossing the globe to showcase the game and try to create buzz for its release date.

Toronto Star – May 1, 2018 (2 of 2)

Vanden Berghe is the tortured visionary who has spent years trying to take the game from inside his head to the consumer. Cardin is the quarterback and quartermaster, tasked with meeting deadlines and satisfying head office. Duchaine is the meticulous marketer, trying to sell the project while agonizing over the time spent away from his family.

Ubisoft had no say in the final product and Chartier says he has yet to hear their thoughts on the project. He says Cardin and Duchaine both thought the film was true to their story.

As for Chartier, he intends to buy a console to get some more hands-on time on gaming.

“But that’s not where I started (this project),” he said. “I started this because I see people around me that are transforming the whole entertainment industry and actually the whole world we live in. And it’s two blocks away.

“I was an opportunist, trying to get into this fortress. But I mean as a human being, as a filmmaker, I’m interested in many many topics. Gaming has become one of them.”

He eventually got some financing from Tele-Quebec for a three-part series on video gaming, combining that with his work on Playing Hard.

Playing Hard is his first feature documentary as a director.

He hopes to find more avenues to showcase the film after Hot Docs, with a digital release slated for the end of the year.

Director Stephen Low on his new doc *The Trolley*, the beauty of streetcars and shooting on IMAX



The Globe and Mail 2 month

When you think of documentaries, the operative word is “small.” These are generally small-budget films with few resources and often diminished theatrical exposure. But Canadian director Stephen Low doesn’t do small – his docs are made for the biggest screen possible: IMAX. The long-time large-format pioneer – whose father, Colin Low, helped develop the revolutionary medium – makes his way to Toronto’s Hot Docs with the festival’s first-ever IMAX offering, *The Trolley*. The *Globe and Mail* spoke with Low about the doc – which is part public-transportation polemic, part ode to the hugeness of the IMAX format – ahead of its world premiere May 5.

The film, which advocates heavily for the revitalization of the streetcar around the world, seems like it’s Doug Ford’s worst nightmare.

It was Rob Ford who was in power when I first pondered this thing, actually. He inspired me to make it because he was always going on and on about subways, and then I think Stephen Harper came to town and said he didn’t like streetcars because they got in his way. Well, dude, there are 100 people on that streetcar, and you’re getting in their way.

Do you have a car?

Yeah, I have a little Volkswagen. I’m a motor monkey, so I’m a bit of a hypocrite. But I live in the suburbs of Montreal, where there’s no great option.

The film mostly focuses on Toronto’s rail system. When did you first become intrigued by it?

Dotemirates – May 2018 (2 of 3)

When I was a kid, I worked at the Canadian Railway Museum, so the passion was there from way back. But I was mostly interested in the wisdom of Toronto when, compared with virtually everywhere else in the Western world, streetcar tracks were being destroyed. Toronto was one of the few cities that kept a big system, so I wanted to understand why.

Are you optimistic of the streetcar's future, not only in Toronto but across the world?

It's a battle, in every single jurisdiction. It's a battle between people who want to save the world, and those who couldn't care less or don't do the math or are simply wedded to the automobile. The purpose of this film is to say, give people sharp tools to fight these battles because the car lobby will fight it.

Why was a documentary about streetcars, then, a good fit for IMAX?

Having travelled across the world and having seen how beautiful cities could be without cars, there's this visceral, aesthetic sense to the rail system. Getting close to a rail system is even better than filming a car race, because we go so slowly that you get a terrific, kinetic point of view. If people could see that, and feel that, on a giant screen, I thought it would help sell the idea of streetcars.

What kind of challenges did you face shooting these massive machines on IMAX?

We used the latest digital equipment for this, mounting cameras on streetcars and leaving them running for long periods. We had cranes and dollies and helicopters, too, but we want to get as close as possible to achieve this high-depth visual look. We're not running around with an iPhone, that's for sure.

So what do you make, as a large-format film advocate, of someone such as Steven Soderbergh shooting his movie *Unsane* on an iPhone?

That's sort of a Hollywood thing, and they're weak compared to IMAX. Historically, IMAX has 10 times the resolution of what he's doing with his iPhone. We practise the art of high-res.

Hollywood is investing in IMAX films a bit more, though, with something like Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk*.

It's still very expensive to use, though. I don't envy Chris. His daily costs are in the millions of dollars because you have hundreds of people standing around all day to wait for light – light is

Dotemirates – May 2018 (3 of 3)

critical in IMAX. Hollywood can't afford it. It's never in the cards for Hollywood to widely use IMAX cameras.

Where is the future of the format going, then?

I hope there's money for educational films – that's what real IMAX was designed for: the science institutions and educational institutions. Seeing an IMAX film, it's inspiring for kids to learn. But films like that, films like The Trolley, are very hard to fund. There's no return on investment in IMAX. It needs sponsorship to make it work.

How did you fund The Trolley?

We funded a lot of it ourselves, and we went into hock, basically. This kind of work, it's a work of passion.

The Trolley screens for free at the Cinesphere Ontario Place theatre in Toronto on May 5 ()

This interview has been condensed and edited

Film Review: ‘Mr. Fish: Cartooning From the Deep End’

An incendiary political cartoonist is the subject of Pablo Bryant's ingratiating documentary.

By **DENNIS HARVEY**

May 1, 2018 2:38PM PT



CREDIT: Courtesy Palm Springs Film Festival

Director:

Pablo Bryant

With:

Dwayne Booth, Diana Day, Robert Scheer, Ann Telnaes, F.X. Feeney, Graham Nash, Mort Gerberg, Ted Rall, Victor Navasky.

1 hour 10 minutes

A stubbornly amiable film about a compulsively provocative talent, “Mr. Fish” ponders the outer limits of editorial cartooning in an age where there’s arguably more fodder for such commentary than ever — but also more blowback from those who don’t want to be challenged, or simply disagreed with.

Cinematographer Pablo Bryant’s first directorial feature couches the larger issues of modern politics and media in a portrait of an artist almost self-defeatingly resistant to compromise. Brisk and ingratiating, with some brief animated sequences adding color, this is an easy watch despite the frequently incendiary nature of its subject’s barbed images. Those images, however, along with a fair amount of salty language, could limit the documentary’s broadcast sales.

Mr. Fish is the nom de plume of Dwayne Booth, who starts things off here relating how even as a child — a small-town New Jersey white boy who wanted to be Angela Davis when he grew up — he sought to change the world via shock value. A few decades later, he’s an esteemed cartoonist whose work has been most frequently seen in Harper’s, The Nation, the Los Angeles Times, LA Weekly and The Village Voice, as well as online outlets.

While you may not have heard of him, odds are you’ve probably seen at least a couple of his more famous panels: For instance the parody of Norman Rockwell’s self-portrait in which a man sees his real self in a KKK robe in the mirror, yet paints his delusional self as Captain America; or the one in which another artist asks a curator for money to finish his latest work — a picture of the potential benefactor with the legend “F——g Assho.”

Variety – May 1, 2018 (2 of 3)

Booth's humor is usually rude and mind-spinning in this manner, which would be challenge enough for mainstream publishers. But what's perhaps been an even bigger roadblock is that while many of Mr. Fish's cartoons resonate comfortably enough with MOR-to-progressive readers, his targets aren't reliably partisan ones — and many bridled at the typically blunt, envelope-pushing critiques he aimed at President Obama during the Democrat's time in office. More than one colleague here tries to gently urge Booth toward tamping down his often lewd, macabre sensibility a few degrees to gain the commercial success that should be his. (Beyond shrinking placement in fast-disappearing publications, he doesn't do very well selling original drawings to collectors, either.) "I want cartooning to be dangerous," he says. "Do I want my art to be a threat to the dominant culture? Yes."

Such an attitude might be viable as well as admirable if he weren't also the father of two young daughters, and mate to a loyal but exasperated spouse — a teacher who despairs of his unwillingness to confront their increasing financial straits. "It's time to step up and grow up," she demands when yet again he declines to sully his artistic integrity with "bread and butter work" that would provide a steadier paycheck. But mainstreaming is palpably difficult for Booth: The innately rebellious child of alcoholic parents, he's so sour on institutions and authority in general that he would prefer not to participate in the capitalist system at all if he could.

Though we hear plenty from the subject's editors and sundry admirers (including musician friend Graham Nash), "Mr. Fish" ultimately focuses less on the cartoonist's public stature than on his private struggle. He and wife Diana are a true love match despite her scant overlap with the more transgressive side he channels into his excoriating political and cultural commentary. He may well force himself to compromise ideals in order to be a better provider for his family, but the pain that causes him is no politically correct pose.

Providing tension of a different sort is the genuine fear political satirists like Booth feel after the massacre of the staff of French newspaper "Charlie Hebdo" by Islamic terrorists three years ago, an act that placed a cautious chill on much such outre content. (However, it seems fair to note that in the Trump era, Mr. Fish's brand of outrageous visual commentary is clearly back in vogue with a vengeance.)

Booth's notion is that an editorial cartoonist's task is to "surprise and delight." The artwork seen here does more than live up to that credo; its sharp originality also extends to a wide variety of visual styles and techniques. Having already waded tentatively into commercial animation projects as one possible new revenue stream, he also creates the diverse cartoon sequences that dot this documentary.

Perhaps to further offset the queasiness that Mr. Fish's images often generate, Bryant lends his well-crafted feature a bright, playful, even antic tenor, painting his subject as a lovable eccentric rather than a tortured artist. That notably extends to use of the music of several composers that is so airily pleasant it might have been lifted from a CD called "The Greatest Hits of Brunch." Its subject and his work may define "edgy," but "Mr. Fish" itself is more inclined to be cuddly. Film Review: 'Mr. Fish: Cartooning From the Deep End'

Reviewed online, San Francisco, March 12, 2018. (In Hot Docs, Austin Film Festival, DocNYC, Palm Springs Film Festival, Slamdance, DocLands, SF Docfest.) Running time: 70 MIN.

Variety – May 1, 2018 (3 of 3)

Production: (Docu) A Mr. Fish Documentary presentation of a Next Bryant production in association with Whydah Prods. (International sales: Sideway Films, London.) Producers: Pablo Bryant, Ted Collins. Executive producer: Tom Brady.
Crew: Director: Pablo Bryant. Camera (color, HD), Bryant. Editors: Adam Lichtenstein, Bryant.
Music: Steven Bernstein, Dwayne & Jeff, Stobo.
With: Dwayne Booth, Diana Day, Robert Scheer, Ann Telnaes, F.X. Feeney, Graham Nash, Mort Gerberg, Ted Rall, Victor Navasky.

Scene Creek – May 1, 2018

Hot Docs 2018 Review: Transformer

DANI SAAD

MAY 1, 2018

Matt “Kroc” Kroczaleski had always been physically strong. He was a student athlete, a marine, and then served on the Presidential Security team under Bill Clinton. As a bodybuilder, a career he set out on post-military, he set the powerlifting world record in 2009 in the 220-pound weight class, squatting 1,003 pounds, deadlifting 810, and benching 738 for a three-lift total of 2,551. Few knew that Matt, while experiencing success professionally, was carrying another type of weight far removed from the gym. Everything changed on July 27, 2015, when YouTube user luimarco posted a video outing Matt as the Instagram user @janaemarielkroc, a transgender woman.

Michael Del Monte’s documentary, *Transformer*, introduces the world to Janae Marie Kroczaleski, who at the beginning the film is fluid, alternating between Matt and Janae. Matt’s transition to Janae is complicated for a whole host of reasons and the film handles the journey with exceptional empathy and balance. The film essentially features two distinct people sharing one body and Del Monte is particularly effective at capturing who Matt and Janae are, and how the transition has weighed on them both.

The film isn’t perfect and some key aspects underdeveloped, including the impact of the public outing, and the abrupt emergence of a sudden, potentially destabilizing obstacle at the very end. Nonetheless, *Transformers* is a straightforward, character-driven doc that is deeply personal. Janae “Kroc” Kroczaleski makes for a wonderfully entertaining and vulnerable subject and her story will surely resonate with festival audiences.

<http://scenecreek.com/hot-docs-2018-review-transformer/>

Scene Creek – May 1, 2018

Hot Docs 2018 Review: Playing Hard

Storytelling is in top form in Jean-Simon Chartier's latest documentary offering, *Playing Hard*.

ANDREW HAMILTON
MAY 1, 2018

The doc revolves around the development of Ubisoft's 2017 release *For Honor*, and the talented individuals who came together to make it happen. At the center of it is Jason VandenBerghe, the creative director of the game, but on this occasion he is also coming into the project with an idea he's dreamt about all his life. As development takes place, the story begins to pull back and reveal what the creation of this game means for everyone involved, which is where *Playing Hard* really begins to shine.

While the film doesn't tread new territory for docs, it skillfully uses storytelling to bring us into the fold. Chartier manages to bring the film past a barebones "behind the scenes" doc and presents something entirely human. Sequences are edited together with emotional punctuation, keeping you connected with the people we see on screen. Cinematic moments break us away from the story and connect us with the larger themes at play. It's all quite engrossing, and Chartier never drops the ball as the emotion weight is carried out till the final moments of dialogue.

Creating something is an all encompassing process, and *Playing Hard* manages to weave a tale that truly paints a picture of how beautiful and personal that journey can be.

<http://scenecreek.com/hot-docs-2018-review-playing-hard/>

Doors Open to Celebrate Toronto's Film and Television Industry

May 1, 2018 5:25 pm | by Nicholas Del Prete | [0 Comments](#)

[Doors Open Toronto](#) returns later this month for its 19th annual event, providing an opportunity to see inside over 130 of the most historically, architecturally, culturally, and socially significant buildings across the city. [Last year](#), the event celebrated Canada's 150th birthday and 15 decades of architecture. This year, the 19th edition offers a timely opportunity to explore the theme of Toronto's film and television industry.



Doors Open Toronto 2018, Image courtesy of Doors Open Toronto

To be held on Saturday, May 26th and Sunday, May 27th, in the theme of this year's event *Film: The Great Romance*, access will be granted to buildings that are not typically open to the public. Presented by [Great Gulf](#), the 2018 Doors Open Toronto program features historic cinemas, film and television studios, artist-run centres, and film training studios located throughout the City. Additionally, this event will also highlight buildings which have been featured in film and television.

Some notable properties worth mentioning:

- Cinesphere
- Fox Theatre
- Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema
- Massey Hall
- Toronto Centre for the Arts
- The Royal Conservatory of Music - Telus Centre for Performance and Learning
- The Revue Cinema
- Kingsway Community Life Centre @ Underground Theatre
- Pure Spirits Still House/Distillery District Film Locations Site Tours
- Ryerson School of Image Arts
- University of Toronto - Edward Johnson Building (Faculty of Music)
- TIFF Film Reference Library
- York Masonic Temple

A full list of the participating properties as well as hours of operations for each building on the weekend of the event can be found on the City's [website](#).

Urban Toronto – May 1, 2018 (2 of 3)



The Royal Conservatory of Music - Telus Centre for Performance and Learning, Image via City of Toronto

Doors Open Toronto 2018 will also feature 10 free Walking Tours which will explore and unpack the histories, stories, and architecture of a variety of neighbourhoods across the city, a number of which have been backdrops for films shot in Toronto. Registration for walking tours begins today, May 1st, with additional spots opening May 17th, and is mandatory for those wishing to attend. Special Programming will also be present, featuring various exhibits, tours, talks and concerts highlighting the theme of film.

The whole event kicks off on Friday, May 25th at 7:30 PM at Ontario Place Cinesphere hosting the first of three OpenInSights programs; Voyage of Time: The IMAX Experience, followed by an engaging Q&A panel discussion on the remarkable history, evolution and global impact of IMAX. There will be 2 additional OpenInSights programs, all providing a glimpse into the creative process of architects, filmmakers, art directors, and production designers, through a series of panel discussions. The second program—What's The Story Here?—will be hosted at John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, which will focus on architecture, film, and Toronto. The third panel discussion—Toronto OnScreen—will be hosted at the Masonic Temple, focussing on the intersection of architecture and cinema.



Cinesphere, Image courtesy of Doors Open Toronto

Toronto's City Hall will be vibrant and action-packed with activity from 10 AM to 5 PM during the Doors Open Toronto weekend. Visitors will experience exhibits and programming, as well as rare access to key locations including the Mayor's Office, the 27th floor observational deck, and council chambers.

Urban Toronto – May 1, 2018 (3 of 3)



Toronto City Hall, Image via City of Toronto

With more than 1,400 on-location film, television, and digital media productions taking place in the city each year, Toronto is North America's third largest screen-based production centre and the heart of Canada's film and television sector. This year's event is quickly approaching and anyone with any level of interest is encouraged to attend this rare and free event.

In the weeks leading up to this year's Doors Open, we will be highlighting our selection of must-see locations and events. In the meantime, for more information, maps, and schedules for this year's event, visit the official [website](#), or if located in Toronto, dial 311. Finally, once Doors Open has come and gone for another year, we hope you'll post some of your photos in our dedicated [Forum thread](#).

CP24 – May 2, 2018

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M.I.A. enters Canada after border ordeal

The British-Tamil musician encountered a few hiccups en route to her Hot Docs appearance in Toronto

BY **RADHEYAN SIMONPILLAI**

MAY 2, 2018

11:33 AM



Mike Ford

After a 48-hour ordeal that included a few hours detained at the Canadian border, M.I.A. has been allowed to enter the country.

The British-Tamil recording artist – real name Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam – was detained in a Canadian customs office at the Peace Bridge border crossing in Fort Erie, her manager Christopher Taylor told NOW. She is now en route to Toronto where she is scheduled to attend the Canadian premiere of her documentary **Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.** at the Hot Docs Film Festival this evening (May 2).

The rapper and pop star had originally planned to fly to Toronto from London, England yesterday, but was **unable to board the flight** due to mysterious stamp on her passport. With help from friends within the Canadian Tamil community, Arulpragasam managed to secure a temporary visa to enter by land via the U.S.-Canadian border at Fort Erie.

After flying to Buffalo this morning, she and her assistant arrived at the Peace Bridge hoping to drive to Toronto. She was held at the border for some hours until just after 10 am.

I'm hosting tonight's premiere and, needless to say, she and I are going to have a lot to discuss.

NOW Magazine – May 2, 2018 (2 of 2)

Over the past four months, Arulpragasam has attended festival screenings of the doc, which was directed by her long-time friend Steven Loveridge, in New York City and Utah.

Arulpragasam has previously spoken out about immigration issues when she said her label would not release her album AIM – which included a song called Visa – because she could not secure a visa for the United States in order to promote it. She was eventually granted a visa in October 2016.

Her last public appearance in Toronto was for a speech at a Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce event that same year.

The 2018 Hot Docs Forum report, part one

By Selina Chignall

May 2, 2018



The 19th edition of the Hot Docs Forum kicked off Tuesday (May 1) with 10 of 21 projects presented to an expert panel. In this first installment of a two-part report, *realscreen* provides a look at what transpired during the first day of the two-day-long pitching event. The projects were presented to a roundtable of leading commissioning editors, film fund representatives, financiers, programming executives, sales agents and delegates.

Projects discussed in this installment include *The Last Year of Congo Mirador* by Venezuelan director Anabel Rodriguez, which looks at a small village in her home country, and the impact of oil extraction on the community; *Uluru & the Magician*, Anna Broinowski's examination of cultural differences; Sissel Morell Dargis' *Balloon Wars*, an intimate portrait of balloon-building gangs in Brazil; *Cuban Dancer*, in which Roberto Salinas follows a young ballet dancer caught in two worlds; and Richard Poplak and Diana Neille's look at the shady world of PR and politics in *Agents of Influence*.

Commissioners stationed around this year's Forum roundtable include representatives from the CBC, BBC, NHK, POV, ARTE France, TVO, PBS' 'Independent Lens', and many more.

Realscreen is covering both days of the Hot Docs Forum (May 1 and 2). Check back at realscreen.com for the second installment of our report.

Realscreen – May 2, 2018 (2 of 8)

As for the films pitched during the first day of the Central Pitch, there was a media blackout on *The Queen's Man*, *Mirror Mirror on the Wall*, *The Rashomon Effect* and *You Won't Kill Me*.

All currency in the descriptions is in U.S. dollars.

The Last Year of Congo Mirador

Director: Anabel Rodriguez

Production company: Sancocho Publico A.C./copro partners Spiraleye Productions LTD and Pacto Audiovisual Prod. Assoc. Ltda.

Production budget: \$285,529

Still needed: \$119,691

Proposed delivery date: November 18, 2018

Hot Docs logline: Despite literally “swimming in oil,” Congo Mirado, a small village built on stilts in the middle of Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela’s largest oil field, is sinking in oily mud, corruption and violence.

The first Venezuelan pitch at Hot Docs Forum comes from director Anabel Rodriguez, whose first feature-length film, *The Last Year of Congo Mirador* (pictured), transports viewers into the small village, which faces an environmental catastrophe as oil is turning Lake Maracaibo, the water the village is built upon, into a swamp.

Despite the small village being plunked in the middle of Latin America’s largest oil field, the film contends that the locals have yet to see any benefit to the resource extraction. Shot over four years, Rodriguez spotlights three characters – a teenage girl, a Chavist supporter and her rival, a local teacher — to show what is going on in the ground in the village.

Chi-hui Yang of Ford Foundation/JustFilms kicked off the Forum by saying the project has some “great pieces in place” around international extraction and elections. What would

Realscreen – May 2, 2018 (3 of 8)

interest the foundation, he says, is the degree to which the larger forces play out in various ways in the community, and how toxic politics and violence impact village relations.

Jess Search, chief executive at the UK's Doc Society, was curious about how the story could impact Venezuela and what the Venezuelan diaspora could do when they see the film. "What are your goals for the film inside the country?"

Christopher White, producer, 'POV'/American Documentary, said his strand would "definitely be interested" in the project and when a rough cut has been complete "to send it our way." He said it's an all-too-familiar story of how oil and money corrupt and how citizens are left behind.

Lois Vossen, executive producer of 'Independent Lens' at PBS, noted that she would have liked to have had a sense of the "dark forces of the oil industry" from the trailer.

Mandy Chang, BBC 'Storyville' commissioner, said she loved the fact Rodriguez is Venezuelan and telling the story of her own country. "We get so many pitches from Americans and English people trying to tell these stories," Chang stated. "I'm looking for the people from those countries to tell the stories."

Uluru & the Magician

Director: Anna Broinowski

Production company: Brindle Films and The Doc Book Co.

Production budget: \$1,046,826

Still needed: \$370,796

Proposed delivery date: May 31, 2019

Hot Docs logline: Fed up with performing at kids' birthday parties for a living, magician Dave Welzman decides to make Uluru disappear – and in the process, finds himself.

Realscreen – May 2, 2018 (4 of 8)

Australian director Anna Broinowski's new project *Uluru & the Magician* places elements of capitalism, tourism and magic into conflict with one of Australia's most sacred sites, the huge sandstone rock formation, Uluru. The point man for the film is magician Dave Welzman, a struggling magician who concocts a plan to reboot his career by somehow making Uluru disappear. As he works alongside the Rock's Traditional Owners to pull off his stunt, he learns about its spiritual importance to the Indigenous community.

Uluru & the Magician is 70% financed and 25% shot with the film's team looking for broadcasters and partners to come on board.

Rasha Salti, head of ARTE France documentary slot 'La Lucarne', said her stream is dedicated to more experimental documentaries so she was not sure if she would be the right person for the project.

Mark Edwards, commissioning editor for documentaries at ARTE France, said the film shows how every person can learn about Indigenous culture. "I think it's a stretch to bring a European audience in but I think it's a creative enough way to try. The question for you should be how do you speak to an audience outside of Western Australia."

Yoko Imai, senior producer/international coproductions & acquisitions at Japanese broadcaster NHK, said Australia is a favorite destination for Japanese tourists. Thus, it's important for the broadcaster to know how deep the film is going into the social mood and the issues surrounding the site.

Jane Jankovic, executive producer of documentaries at Ontario's TVO, said she looks forward to better understanding Aboriginal traditions and culture. However, she didn't see the impact of tourism on the community and the site itself in the trailer and wanted to know how much of that would be brought into the film.

Realscreen – May 2, 2018 (5 of 8)

Al Jazeera English commissioner Poh Si Teng said for her purposes, she needed to clarify who is leading the story. If the main takeaway from the project is to teach global audiences about Aboriginal culture, she wasn't sure if Welzman, the magician, would be the person to guide that process.

Balloon Wars

Director: Sissel Morell Dargis

Production company: House of Real

Production budget: \$463,965

Still needed: \$333,965

Proposed Delivery Date: January 13, 2019

Hot Docs logline: A film about a secretive gang where passion for making paper take flight, and desire for recognition, drives favela thugs to extremes in their struggles to get giant hot-air balloons airborne.

Danish filmmaker Sissel Morrel Dargis takes audiences into the favelas of Sao Paulo where gangs compete in illegal hot-air balloon competitions. The point of entry into this world is Jaba, a 32-year old man who is so passionate about building balloons that his wife, after giving him the ultimatum "the family or the balloons," leaves him. The common enemy facing the gangs are the authorities who are always on the trail of Jaba and other enthusiasts.

With 20% funding in place, the team on *Balloon Wars* is looking for co-financing, sales agents and copro partners.

ARTE France's Mark Edwards said he was struck by the beauty of what Jaba and the other gangs are doing with the balloons, and that he liked the fresh take on the present reality of working-class Brazil. He added that he thought the film will travel but he wasn't sure if it would fit the broadcaster's strands.

Realscreen – May 2, 2018 (6 of 8)

Chris Hastings, executive producer & editorial manager for World Channel at WGBH Boston, said he also liked seeing a different side to Brazil, beyond the narrative of violence. “I think it would be interesting from an arts perspective to look at this film in that way, and use it as a vehicle to talk about the poverty we do know about Brazil in another way.” Hastings said World Channel would be interested in the film, perhaps as an acquisition.

TVO’s Jane Jankovic said the film is multi-genre and therefore there is flexibility in how the public service broadcaster could present it. The commissioner was also curious about how the population, which is not affluent, has the time and resources to build such elaborate balloons.

What most interested ARTE France’s Rasha Salti about *Balloon Wars* was the class and social dynamics the film presents and the story of where a man’s obsession leads.

Cuban Dancer

Director: Roberto Salinas

Production company: Indycyca SNC/copro partner: Micro-Documentaries

Production budget: \$358,440

Still needed: \$224,030

Proposed Delivery Date: November 2, 2018

Hot Docs logline: A talented student of the National Ballet School of Cuba is forced to emigrate to Miami. Alexis struggles to adapt and become a principal dancer in the USA. Cuban ballet dancer Alexis is a promising student at the National Ballet School of Cuba when political changes compel his parents to move to Miami where they reunite with Alexis’ half-sister. After leaving Havana, the young dancer has to confront the elite educational system in his new home. He receives a scholarship to the HARID Conservatory. He is now caught between two cultures, and as he is scouted by prestigious ballet companies, is torn between staying in America and returning home to Cuba. Director Roberto Salinas captures Alexis on his journey and the decisions he must make.

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Marie Nelson, VP news & public affairs at PBS, said she was “pleased” to see a film from Cuba which gives audiences a different slice of life. However, she said the trailer left out Alexis’ voice and she would have liked to have had more access to his thoughts.

Jenny Raskin, head of development at Impact Partners, remarked that she is a “huge dance fan, so you’ve got me,” but echoed Nelson’s point about Alexis’ absent voice. The exec also wanted to know how long the director planned on sticking with the dancer’s story.

ARTE France’s Edwards said that what interested him about the project is that Salinas caught Alexis during a shift in Cuba-U.S. relations where people are wondering what the impact will be for Cuban-Americans and Cubans on their native soil.

Agents of Influence

Director: Richard Poplak, Diana Neille

Production company: EyeSteelFilm/copro partners: Fireworx Media, Chronicle

Production budget: \$802,867

Still needed: \$502,564

Proposed delivery date: January 18, 2019

Hot Docs logline: From the journalists who exposed the notorious reputation management firm Bell Pottinger comes a globetrotting investigation into these architects of “post-truth,” and the growing global misinformation complex they’ve helped construct. Filmmakers and award-winning investigative reporters Richard Poplak and Diane Neillie set out to chart the history of postmodern spin-doctoring popularized by the UK PR firm Bell Pottinger agency. *Agents of Influence* is a political thriller that looks at the shady universe of the 0.1 per cent, while also examining the global media and the “alternative facts” phenomenon.

Christopher White, director of programming and production at ‘POV’, said as the strand is premiering **Kimberley Reed’s *Dark Money*** feature about the flood of special interest

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money in politics later in the year, he said the exploration of advertising and PR as it pertains to the pursuit of power is very interesting.

Mandy Chang of BBC ‘Storyville’ said this is a project her team has been tracking for some time and believes it would find a home with a British audience.

And Andreas Fay, head of acquisitions for VGTV Norway said he found the story to be “complex and fascinating” and that while he was not sure if it would find a home on his network, he hopes it does find an audience in Norway.

'Prince's Tale' Ousts Mr. Rogers in Hot Docs Audience Award Race

Posted on May 2nd, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Prince's Tale

By Pat Mullen

A Canadian short doc has kicked Oscar winner Morgan Neville from the top of the podium! Jamie Miller's *Prince's Tale* took the lead in the race for the Hot Docs Audience Award. Oddly, the film did not make the top five for the Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Film, which must be reserved for features. The film is an empowering story of a burn survivor who channels his experience into art. The short screens with the feature *Rezo*.

Mr. Rogers remained in the hunt at #2, while *On Her Shoulders* joins the pack at #3. Audiences were evidently more forgiving of the film than we were. Surprisingly falling off the list was Mexican doc *Mamacita*, which played very well to the crowd at the Isabel Bader yesterday while being at #2 in the previous rankings. *Transformer* continued to hold the top spot in the Canadian race with *The Accountant of Auschwitz* close behind.

The top 20 films in the Audience Award race as of May 2 are:

1. Prince's Tale
2. Won't You Be My Neighbor?
3. On Her Shoulders
4. Transformer
5. A Woman Captured
6. The Accountant of Auschwitz
7. The Game Changers
8. The Silver Branch

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9. This Mountain Life
10. Bathtubs over Broadway
11. The Silence of Others
12. Letter from Masanjia
13. Exit Music
14. Warrior Women
15. The Oslo Diaries
16. Don't Be Nice
17. Grit
18. Laila at the Bridge
19. Mr. Fish: Cartooning From the Deep End
20. McQueen

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Bringing Indigenous voices to the forefront

In his keynote address at the Hot Docs Film Festival, Indigenous Screen Office director Jesse Wenté laid out his goals for the newly launched office.

By Regan Reid
May 2, 2018



The physical resources that support Canada's new Indigenous Screen Office (ISO) may be modest, but the ideas that drive it are ambitious and large in scale.

That was the message driven home by Jesse Wenté, director of the ISO during his Hot Docs Industry keynote presentation on May 1.

Waving his cell phone at the audience and indicating it is the ISO's main "office" at this point, he joked: "We're very mobile and fluid."

Launched in February, the ISO aims to implement a long-term strategy to support Indigenous talent, short- and feature-script development, and television and digital media and training in Canada. The office will also facilitate relationships with broadcasters, distributors, training institutions and federal funders.

The program has a two-year funding commitment, said Wenté, and it's his job to ensure it becomes permanent.

But Wenté has another important, overriding goal for his tenure as director of ISO: narrative sovereignty for Indigenous creators in Canada.

"When I talk about narrative sovereignty, what I'm really talking about is the ability of the nations to have some measure of control over the stories that are told about themselves," he said.

Throughout the entire history of filmmaking, the overwhelming majority of stories told about Indigenous peoples – both fictional and documentaries – he said, have been told by non-Indigenous people.

"What those stories have allowed is the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples," he argued.

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In his hour-long talk, Wente detailed the importance of narrative sovereignty to nation states around the world. Canada, for example, has a points system to ensure the stories that receive funding are appropriately “Canadian” and tell Canadian stories. He pushed the point by arguing a film about the history of Quebec would never be made by an entirely Anglo team in Toronto. “We’ve built duplicate systems to prevent that from ever happening,” he said. But the same is not true for Indigenous storytellers.

Through legislation like the Potlatch Ban, which was in place from 1884 to 1951, Indigenous peoples were outlawed from performing traditional ceremonies and sharing their stories. And the effects of legislation like this have been long-lasting and far-reaching. As reports like that authored by Marcia Nickerson (which called for the creation of an Indigenous screen office) have long argued, systemic barriers of access and equity for Indigenous creators in the screen industry persist to this day.

Now, he said, through the ISO, Indigenous creators will have an opportunity to tell their own stories.

“This is going to be an independent office that is seeking narrative sovereignty for Indigenous screen storytellers and through that is looking to help Canadian culture evolve,” he said.

“I am a firm believer that cultural bodies, institutions, places of higher learning, are not just invested in the commerce of it...they are invested in shifting cultures and shifting the narratives by which nations understand each other.”

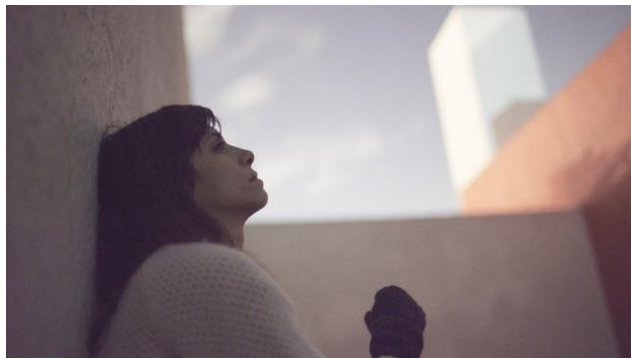
Last Half Hot Docs Gems to Catch

May 2, 2018 11:14 pm | by Craig White | [0 Comments](#)

With about 260 documentaries being shown this year at Hot Docs, it's been quite the task, despite all of the summaries in the event's guide book, to get a full picture of what's available in advance. You can't really capture it all, so as Hot Docs proceeds, it's inevitable that some films feel like they just "popped up" once you finally get into the cinemas. (Many films are available to the press in pre-festival screenings, or as screeners to be watched online, while some are not made available in advance.) So, here are some that, along with the others that we have already covered, I expect will be of particular interest to those who read UrbanToronto.

The Proposal is one of the most audacious films I have seen at Hot Docs over the years. It tells the story of conceptual artist Jill Magid's stay at the home of the late Pritzker Prize-winning architect Luis Barragán and her attempts to study his work. (If you're intrigued by Barragán's work like I am, you'll no doubt be keen to see a film of his work, like I was: imagery is not produced that often.)

What she finds is that Barragán's archive is now in Switzerland, and controlled by the family which owns the iconic furniture company Vitra. Access to the archive is very tightly controlled, and even the copyright of any images of Barragán's work is controlled by them. Magid is tenacious, respectful, and personable in her quest to gain access, but is rebuffed. Access to the de-patriated archive is a sore point for Mexico in general, and Magid asks what it means if an architect's legacy, especially one considered a national treasure, should be controlled and restricted in such a way. Her answer is that it should not, so Magid, in cooperation with Barragán's family, devises a stunning proposal for the archive owners to consider, one that I cannot spoil here. Not everyone will agree with Magid's offer, but she has no doubt opened a badly needed conversation in an unforgettable way.



Jill Magid is a courtyard in a Barragán building in Mexico City

Second and third screenings play on Friday, May 4 at 10:30 AM at the Lightbox, and Sunday, May 6 at 3:15 PM at the Scotiabank Theatre. Both screenings have tickets available [online](#) for the moment.

The Real Thing is a 54-minute-long film that covers just the opposite of what the title declares. You've seen the images of an Eiffel Tower in a new town in China, but have you seen Venice, China, or London's Tower Bridge in simulacrum? Maybe you know that there's a cathedral in Côte d'Ivoire with a dome that replicates Rome's St Peter's. Director Benoît Felici delves into

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what is behind the copycat landmarks that pop up around the world (and in the case of Sky City, China, where you'll find a whole mini-Paris, not just the Eiffel Tower). French geographer Jean-François Stazak weighs in on what drives our need for identity through sense of place, and what the buildings in our midst do for us.



PARIS TIANDU CHENG, Hangzhou, China 180 m/354 ft Eiffel Tower, image © ARTLINE FILMS

The Real Thing runs with a pair of shorts, both of which should also appeal to the UrbanToronto crowd. **The Earth Is Humming** looks at Japan's relationship to the land that occasionally shifts beneath their feet, and how they prepare for it.



A fire drill in The Earth Is Humming

The Traffic Separating Device, however, is the film that kicks the screening off, and it will be of particular delight for those who shake their head any time someone drives their car into Toronto's Queens Quay streetcar tunnel. In this film, Stockholm has installed a device to stop cars from entering a congested area of town, which—despite all the warning signs that have been put up—manages to snag driver after driver in its tire-blowing trap. Toronto is putting in a gate this year, but you'll wonder if something a little more menacing might be more in order after seeing this film.

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The Traffic Separating Device: Helping to push, image by Johan Palmgren

The Real Thing, The Earth Is Humming, and The Traffic Separating Device all play together twice more at the festival. Tickets for the Thursday, May 3 show can be obtained at the Lightbox in advance of the 4 PM screening. Tickets for the Sunday 1:15 PM screening, also at the Lightbox, can be purchased [online](#) until the end of Saturday (or until they sell out).

“Do Not Be Daunted by the Magnitude of the Challenge in Front of You”: Assia Boundaoui on Her Surveillance Doc, *The Feeling of Being Watched*



The Feeling of Being Watched

by [Lauren Wissot](#)

in [Directors](#), [Festivals & Events](#), [Interviews](#)

on May 2, 2018

Documentary, [Hot Docs 2018](#), [The Feeling of Being Watched](#), [Tribeca Film Festival 2018](#)

An Algerian-American raised in Bridgeview, Illinois, just south of Chicago, journalist and filmmaker Assia Boundaoui grew up being watched. The FBI has been aggressively spying on her predominantly Arab-American community at least as far back as the '90s, despite the fact that the law enforcement organization uncovered very little lawbreaking in the process.

And now Boundaoui has turned the tables — or rather the lens — on the Federal Bureau with her debut feature, *The Feeling of Being Watched* (an alumnus of Spotlight on Documentaries at IFP Week). The film's a nonfiction journey that takes Boundaoui from dogged FOIA requests to a survey of our long history of racial and religious profiling — ultimately ending in, what she terms, a strategy for “citizen under-sight.”

Filmmaker caught up with the festival-hopping director during the film's international premiere at Hot Docs (right on the heels of its Tribeca world premiere).

Filmmaker: One of the interesting aspects of the Bridgeview surveillance story is that it most definitely cannot be blamed on the Trump administration. This is a practice that's been going on for decades, has been ingrained in the FBI since its inception, as your documentary emphasizes. Since your hope is to force changes in the system by documenting the FBI's tactics — creating a “two-way gaze” as you call it — I'm wondering if you see your strategy as akin to placing body cams on cops. Are you creating some sort of outreach campaign to encourage others to do the same?

Boundaoui: I think putting body cams on the police is a fraught initiative. What I'm proposing is something else — metaphorically putting body cams on people under surveillance. What I'm

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proposing is the opposite of oversight. My strategy is citizen under-sight — an action undertaken by the subjects of surveillance, of the systems of surveillance.

As an example, on opening night of the Tribeca Film Festival last week, I, along with a team of artists and guerrilla projectionists, projected redacted FBI documents from Operation Vulgar Betrayal alongside the Latin phrase, “Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?” (“Who will watch the watchers?”) onto the side of “Titanpointe,” the NSA building in lower Manhattan. It’s part of a larger initiative that I call “The Inverse Surveillance Project” that I’m developing alongside the film’s outreach campaign. Using artistic storytelling and technological tools, I intend to exploit the tens of thousands of documents that the government secretly collected and maintained about my community for decades. This will, on the one hand, hold the government accountable and compel transparency. On the other hand, it will also re-appropriate and repurpose this secretly collected data to reframe the narrative about American-Muslims, and shape a beautiful and multifaceted story of my community.

Filmmaker: What kind of pushback have you gotten from the FBI? Do you think your journalism credentials (BBC, NPR, CNN, etc.) may have shielded you in a way unavailable to the everyday citizen journo with a smartphone?

Boundaoui: In many cases my being a journalist didn’t help because I was freelance and independent and didn’t have a big media organization going to bat for me. So, for example, in the case of requesting records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), I was initially denied expedited processing for the records I’d requested because the FBI did not want to recognize me as a journalist.

As a private citizen you are entitled to public disclosure by government agencies, but the FBI routinely delays and denies these requests to both private citizens and members of the press. The truth is, if you want to actually get any records in a timely manner, you have to sue the Department of Justice and have a federal judge compel them to produce. Otherwise you’re likely to end up waiting for years to get access to a sliver of redacted pages. Which is what I had to do in the end — get a pro-bono law firm to help me sue the FBI in federal court to get access to these records. And we won.

Filmmaker: For me, one of the most disturbing consequences of government surveillance is best illustrated by that young woman in your community we’re told about, who was convinced shady characters were following her. Everyone just assumed she was referring to the FBI agents known to be spying on the neighborhood — when in fact she was suffering from a schizoaffective disorder. Which gets to the chicken-and-egg aspect of government surveillance. Was she simply mentally ill, or did the government send a mentally fragile person over the edge? (Can the FBI even be held accountable for emotional damages?) What are your thoughts on all this?

Boundaoui: I’m not making the contention that the FBI caused my friend’s schizophrenia. Rather that the FBI created such a powerful culture of fear and paranoia in my community — as

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a result of many years of surveillance — that many of us could not recognize the warning signs of mental illness when it unfolded right in front of us. It's this culture of paranoia that I try to unravel in the film. Why were we plagued with it in the place that I grew up? Where did it come from? Why does it still haunt me/us? The effects of surveillance are emotionally and psychologically traumatic, particularly on the consciousness of young people and over an extended period of time. What I try to do in the film is unpack this personal and collective trauma — and perhaps in doing so try to feel a little better about it.

Filmmaker: Given the current climate — one in which xenophobia is on the rise, but also a Trump-backed push to question FBI tactics — do you see a path for right and left to come together on this issue of mass surveillance?

Boundaoui: Surveillance is an issue that affects us all. Government overreach into our private lives is an issue that affects us all. But it is also certainly true that we Americans are not all surveilled equally. Since the advent of the Department of Justice, from Japanese internment to COINTELPRO, the FBI has profiled and targeted people of color and immigrants as subversives and persons of interest. The present day is no exception. The FBI has labeled both Black Lives Matter and Standing Rock activists as domestic threats to national security. I believe strongly in the public's right to know, and that the absence of government transparency creates fertile ground for impunity and injustice. This film intends to influence a mainstream American audience's emotional understanding of national security policies. And create a shift in public attitudes that may contribute meaningfully to ending systems that allow the unwarranted surveillance and profiling of communities of color in America.

Filmmaker: Do you have any advice for other filmmakers looking to challenge the US government and its (often dubious) practices? Anything you learned, including from mistakes you may have made, during the filmmaking process?

Boundaoui: To get any answers from government agencies you have to be super persistent and patient. That's my biggest piece of advice — do not be daunted by the magnitude of the bureaucracy or the challenge in front of you. Just keep pressing forward however you can. If first-person subjects won't talk on the record, go to the primary evidence, get your hands on the documents. And use the federal courts as a check against the system.

<https://filmmakermagazine.com/105231-do-not-be-daunted-by-the-magnitude-of-the-challenge-in-front-of-you-assia-boudaoui-on-her-surveillance-doc-the-feeling-of-being-watched/>

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'We need to continue having this conversation': Slut or Nut' documentary details difficulty of reporting sexual assault

In the era of #MeToo and Time's Up, the film shows the difficulties of taking accusations to school officials and authorities in Canada



"Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial" follows Gray as she navigates the Canadian legal system and faces online harassment after accusing a fellow PhD candidate at York University in Toronto of sexual assault. *Chris Young / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

THE CANADIAN PRESS

VICTORIA AHEARN

May 2, 2018

2:50 PM EDT

Filed under

TORONTO — Mandi Gray admits she's anxious about being the face of the new Canadian documentary "Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial."

"Even coming here today, it was really nerve-racking," she said in a recent interview at a press conference for the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

"The media hasn't been kind to me. I receive a lot of death threats, rape threats regularly. There are a lot of consequences to being someone that speaks publicly about sexual assault.

"But I'm also very supported and my community has been amazing," she continued.

"They've supported me in so many different ways that I feel that it is an absolute necessity to keep going — because we need to continue having this conversation."

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I find that there's a lot of support of the nameless, faceless survivor but when we actually hear stories, especially when it's a perpetrator who's in a position of power, then we begin to dismiss the stories

“Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial” screens Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at Hot Docs. It follows Gray as she navigates the Canadian legal system and faces online harassment after accusing a fellow PhD candidate at York University in Toronto of sexual assault.

Last July, the accused had his conviction overturned after an Ontario appeal court found the trial judge relied too heavily on “rape literature.”

In the era of #MeToo and Time's Up, in which women are being encouraged to report sexual assault, the film shows the difficulties of taking accusations to school officials and authorities in Canada. Gray and others explain the process involved in reporting sexual assault cases — from going to the police and hospital, to meeting with a sexual assault counsellor and proceeding to court.

At trial in Canada, sexual assault complainants don't get legal representation unless they pay for it, which Gray hopes will change. “Getting lawyers to represent me at both the university and through the legal process was absolutely life-changing,” said Gray, who has become a prominent sexual assault activist and is doing her PhD in sociology.

“Legal counsel is not accessible to most, but that was absolutely fundamental in terms of how I was able to be a self-advocate in these systems and then also be supported through understanding and learning the laws.”

Other speakers in the doc include Gray's mother, a sexual assault nurse, and two sexual assault survivors identified only as Jane Doe.

Kelly Showker directed and incorporated footage Gray shot of herself on her laptop and phone.

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Gray said she shot video diaries and wrote detailed journals of her experience as a way of documenting it for her own purposes. She had no idea the footage would one day wind up in a feature-length documentary. “The film not only has empowered me to share my story but a lot of others have come forward as a result of hearing about the film or being involved in the film,” she said.

“So we have a number of almost entirely women artists who’ve donated their time to the film, who have contributed to the film in a number of different ways.

“It’s been really empowering to work with this amazing community of women artists, filmmakers, to put this film together. I really hope that it encourages young women to get involved in film and to create and use art as a medium of talking about difficult subjects.”

She also hopes the film will help discourage immediate dismissals of sexual assault claims.

“I find that there’s a lot of support of the nameless, faceless survivor but when we actually hear stories, especially when it’s a perpetrator who’s in a position of power, then we begin to dismiss the stories,” Gray said.

“So I really want people to see that these victims, these survivors, are actual real, living people who have lives that are completely damaged and turned upside down in response to sexual assault — and not just the sexual assault but the institutional failures to respond to sexual assault.”

<http://nationalpost.com/news/canada/we-need-to-continue-having-this-conversation-slut-or-nut-documentary-details-difficulty-of-reporting-sexual-assault>

Playing Hard: Video game designer Jason VandenBerghe takes us inside the making of *For Honor*

CBC Radio · May 2



Video game designer Jason VandenBerghe with guest host Laurie Brown in the q studio in Toronto, Ont. (Vivian Rashotte/CBC)

0 comments

Listen 15:17

For 13 years, Jason VandenBerghe believed in his vision for a video game. The Montreal-based video game developer wanted to design a fantasy fighting game called *For Honor* for Ubisoft — one of the biggest companies in the video game business. Now, a new documentary follows VandenBerghe's journey in bringing his vision to life.

Playing Hard is just like any creative project you've been a part of before. The film shows plenty of ups and downs, stressful moments and a growing team of 20 to 500 people across the world working to cross that finish line.



CBC Radio (q) – May 2, 2018 (2 of 2)

Playing Hard. (Hot Docs)

Today, VandenBerghe joins guest host Laurie Brown live in the *q* studio to tell you what it was like to live through all of this and why he wanted to make *For Honor*.

"I wanted to make a game that gave people who have this warrior's heart a place to try it out — to see what it would be like to stand in the way of danger," says VandenBerghe. "And I wanted to create a game [that had] a community of supportive, positive people that would include all races, creeds, genders — everyone — I wanted everyone to be included in that. I wanted to create a space for people to become that knight, Viking or samurai that was inside of their heart."

For Honor was finally released in 2017. You can see *Playing Hard*, directed by Jean-Simon Chartier, at the Hot Docs Film Festival in Toronto from Wednesday, May 2 until Friday, May 4.

— *Produced by Tayo Bero*

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/playing-hard-video-game-designer-jason-vandenbergh-takes-us-inside-the-making-of-for-honor-1.4643573>

Hot Docs tips hat to humble clowns

Early cast members of Saturday Night Live had humility baked right into their troupe name: The Not Ready For Prime Time Players.



VIA HOT DOCS **Bill Murray in The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man, which explores the star's habit of downplaying fame.**

It was a send-up of showbiz pretensions and a signal of their determination to make a splash in comedy while remaining in touch with regular folks. They meant it, too, looking askance at Chevy Chase when he bolted SNL after its debut 1975-76 season to pursue Hollywood stardom.

Bill Murray and the late Gilda Radner, briefly a real-life couple in the early 1970s and also a hilarious nerd duo Todd DiLaMuca and Lisa Loopner on SNL, were prime practitioners of this humble-fame approach, which Murray still espouses, even as the world insisted on giving them applause, awards and adoration.

It's evident in two films screening at Hot Docs, the documentary film festival currently underway in Toronto: Tommy Avallone's *The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned From a Mythical Man* and Lisa D'Apolito's *Love, Gilda*.

The Bill Murray Stories, which has screenings tonight, Saturday and Sunday at Hot Docs, addresses head-on the title subject's amusingly bizarre habit of downplaying his fame while barging into regular lives. Avallone follows up reports, readily available online — search “Bill Murray photobomb” on YouTube — of the comic actor's propensity to delight his many fans by spontaneously joining in on whatever they're doing.

He's popped up in engagement photos, at bachelor parties, birthday bashes and even a White House press briefing, the latter to mock-solemnly make his predictions for World Series success for his beloved Chicago Cubs.

Murray is happy to do just about anything to help make an event happier: shake a tambourine, serve drinks and even wash dishes. Avallone's film includes clips of many grainy and shaky cellphone videos taken by excited Murray fans, as the star of *Ghostbusters*, *Caddyshack* and *Lost In Translation* — to name just three of his many post- SNL movie hits — suddenly graces them with his presence.

“No one will ever believe you,” Murray tells the startled and amused people he's “photobombed,” a term that in his case should be enlarged to “memory bombed,” one fan suggests, because of how much of an impact Murray makes just by acting like a regular Joe.

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Murray, 67, often exits the scene as quickly as he makes it, and he's not inclined — in this movie or elsewhere — to comment on the meaning of his random visits. When a fan at the 2015 Comic-Con asks Murray to explain his pop-up encounters, the comic smiles and feigns ignorance: "I don't know what he's talking about," he says to the crowd. "It sounds like fun though, doesn't it?"

He'll leave it to others to analyze his intentions, although it's obvious he simply enjoys being loved. A Texas bartender named Tyler Van Aiken tells Avallone's camera that he figures Murray long ago decided it would be easier to just embrace stardom, rather than try to flee from it, as so many celebrities seem to do.

"How crazy would it be if you walked around town and everybody loved you? That would be exhausting," Van Aiken says.

Gilda Radner, who died from ovarian cancer in 1989 at the age of 42, had a more complicated approach to stardom. She was simultaneously enraptured and repelled by it, as *Love*, Gilda makes clear.

Radner grew up in Detroit thinking of herself as homely and fat (she had a lifelong struggle with eating disorders), yet secure in the knowledge that she could make people laugh with her many self-deprecating characters — in her SNL years they included such popular creations as language-mangling senior Emily Litella and sassy Latina Roseanne Roseannadanna.

Her brief life included an Emmy win, a hit one-woman show on Broadway and a posthumous Grammy. She also starred in several Hollywood comedies — none of them nearly as successful as Murray's, to her chagrin.

Yet at heart, Radner longed to be just accepted and adored as a regular person.

"My main priority is to be a girl," she writes in her abundant diary notes, revealed in *Love*, Gilda. "I never wanted to be anything else."

But her talent at making people laugh would insist on making her a star, right when she first grabbed public attention as part of the *Godspell* troupe in Toronto, where she would meet Martin Short, a future SNL player and briefly a romantic partner.

Radner was the first cast member hired by SNL producer Lorne Michaels for his counterculture TV show. She was arguably the most beloved member of *The Not Ready For Prime Time Players* during their five-year reign on SNL from 1975 to 1980.

Love, Gilda — which has two screenings left at Hot Docs, on Thursday and Saturday — credits her with being the first person to utter the word "bitch" on network TV without being censored, a tribute both to Radner and the popularity of her daffy Litella character, whom she based on her adored childhood nanny.

She's also apparently the first person to talk openly on network TV about having cancer, which she did on her friend Garry Shandling's show, a few months before her death. She

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managed to make fun of a very bad situation, also doing so in her autobiography *It's Always Something*, titled for a Roseanne Roseannadanna catch phrase.

"My biggest motivation has always been love," Radner wrote in another of her diary entries, and this humble statement of purpose applies equally to her and Bill Murray.



See hotdocs.ca for screening times and venues.

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Audrey Gordon — “Siblings”

BY Sophie Willard May 2, 2018

Audrey Gordon is a French documentary filmmaker and former journalist. She has directed several documentaries for TV including “Kinderlekh,” “Edith and Lucile,” “A Two-way-Street,” and “90 Seconds.” “Siblings” is her feature-length debut.

“Siblings” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 3.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

AG: Liberty is an 11-year-old girl living with her foster mom, far from her biological siblings. She goes to a special summer camp that brings separated brothers and sisters together. There, she not only reunites with her biological siblings but also meets Brandi, a 17-year-old girl who shares the same experience. Liberty is inspired by her, and timidly tries to approach her. To me, this is the story of two solitary trees who meet and are drawn to each other.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

AG: While directing my first film, I met a little French girl living in the foster care system who had been separated from her brother. I started doing some research on siblings in foster care, and discovered Camp To Belong, which helps siblings to reunite once a year. That was the beginning. When I met Liberty, I felt so connected to her that I was convinced that I wanted to tell the story through her eyes. Then I met Brandi and her sister, who also inspired me.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

AG: I hope that these solitary trees will find their echo—that it will make them think about how we are all just trying to find our place somewhere. Also, I would like for people to feel as though they were really meeting Liberty and Brandi, who are both amazing women.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

AG: Finding the story that I truly wanted to tell. I had a first version of the film in which what I was trying to say was not very clear. I decided to go back to Oregon a year and a half later and rebuild the film with the editor. Eventually I accepted that the story that touched me the most was the meeting between those two girls who are not sisters.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

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AG: There were two producers—Charles Gillibert in France, and Théo Vieljeux in the U.S.—who invested in the film, and a sponsor who was touched by the subject and gave us funding for the second part. That helped us finish the film.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

AG: I feel very honored. For the first time, I have the feeling of belonging to a wider community of documentary directors. It's funny how it echoes with the name of the summer camp in the film, Camp To Belong.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

AG: Worst advice: Wait to find funding or some kind of support before starting a project. Best advice: Work with people you feel very connected to. I was lucky enough to meet Fanny Mazoyer, a wonderful female DP, Benjamin Silvestre, a great sound engineer, and Baptiste Saint-Dizier, a fantastic editor .
I wouldn't have [achieved nearly as much] without this crew.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

AG: Don't wait for someone to tell you that your idea is good. Listen to yourself and get the machine going.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

AG: "Certain Women" by Kelly Reichardt. The director manages to create a bond between four beautiful women characters with unique subtlety and delicateness. This is exactly what I look for in a film.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

AG: Of course I support the movement. I believe it is a great moment to be making films, [and] just to be a tiny part of it all.
I also think that it goes beyond the film business. The women who started the movement in Hollywood are models for so many girls in different parts of the world, including many who may never have thought that things could be different—that change was possible.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-audrey-gordon-siblings-ee8eb04dd40b/?gi=a73ac48064d9>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Margarita Cadenas — “Women of the Venezuelan Chaos”

BY Beandrea July May 2, 2018

Margarita Cadenas served as a co-writer and producer for French Television, and has produced numerous commercials around the world. Her filmmaking credits include “Cenizas Eternas,” (“Eternal Ashes”), the “Máscaras” (“Masks”) short film series, and shorts “Macondo” and “Beyond Appearances.”

“Women of the Venezuelan Chaos” will premiere at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 3.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

MC: The film depicts the everyday lives of five ordinary Venezuelan women. Each of them clearly lets us delve into their desperation and hardship. Five different women, five different stories, five visions of battling with dignity for their lives.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

MC: When I realized the extent of the situation in my motherland, it was impossible for me to keep my arms crossed and do nothing. As a film director, I immediately felt the urge and obligation to make a true-to-life documentary in order to cover the subject from various aspects, so as to enlighten the world to a horrendous situation kept under silence by the regime in power.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

MC: I hope people will be in awe, as the film is a real eye opener. Even though the subject is basically covered by the world media, most people do not get to see what is really happening. I hope people will see the documentary as a “cry for help” on behalf of the Venezuelan population.

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

MC: As we had to work totally clandestinely, the biggest challenge was to find people prepared to tell their story, and to find a team of courageous collaborators. And finally, to get the material through strict Venezuelan customs safely to France.

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

MC: In the beginning, MC2 Productions in Paris, France gave me their support. Then, we found two anonymous female investors whose funding allowed me to commence production. Afterwards, another French film company, Les Films d’ici, joined the project as co-producers.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

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MC: I am both honored and delighted as Hot Docs is such a reputed international documentary festival with large audiences and film industry professionals. Hoping to make as many global minds as possible aware of the situation in Venezuela, I am convinced that having my film play during Hot Docs will surely help me reach my goal.

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

MC: The worst advice I received was not to go to Venezuela to film the documentary because of the dangers involved. So, in fact, that bad advice became good advice! It made me even more aware of the gravity of the situation. It enforced my convictions to go to Venezuela to make the film. Needless to say, we took all the necessary precautions; we even used bodyguards for our protection.

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

MC: Always have the courage of your convictions. If you believe in your project, don't stop until it's completed.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

MC: My favorite woman-directed film is "Zero Dark Thirty," directed by Kathryn Bigelow. I really admire her determination and courage by directing such a film from a sensitive woman's point of view. It's one of the most potent films ever made by a woman. Her work of art totally overwhelms the viewers.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #Timesup movement and the push for equality in the film business?

MC: We are now in the 21st century! Many women hold top positions in some of the most prestigious money-making, leading world companies. In my mind, there's no reason why things shouldn't be the same in the film industry. Talent does not have a gender. Speaking publicly about harassment and assault will hopefully lead to a decrease in these inhuman attacks. I feel that the #TimesUp movement's push for equality is very positive, and hopefully it will place the film industry in line with other major industries.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-margarita-cadenas-women-of-the-venezuelan-chaos-25c8c35ddf3d/?gi=b011a1e1e3ca>

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The Canadian Press

Updated: May 2, 2018



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"Even coming here today, it was really nerve-racking," she said in a recent interview at a press conference for the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival.

"The media hasn't been kind to me. I receive a lot of death threats, rape threats regularly. There are a lot of consequences to being someone that speaks publicly about sexual assault. "But I'm also very supported and my community has been amazing," she continued.

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Last July, the accused had his conviction overturned after an Ontario appeal court found the trial judge relied too heavily on "rape literature."

Calgary Herald – May 2, 2018 (2 of 2)

In the era of #MeToo and Time's Up, in which women are being encouraged to report sexual assault, the film shows the difficulties of taking accusations to school officials and authorities in Canada. Gray and others explain the process involved in reporting sexual assault cases — from going to the police and hospital, to meeting with a sexual assault counsellor and proceeding to court.

At trial in Canada, sexual assault complainants don't get legal representation unless they pay for it, which Gray hopes will change. "Getting lawyers to represent me at both the university and

through the legal process was absolutely life-changing," said Gray, who has become a prominent sexual assault activist and is doing her PhD in sociology.

"Legal counsel is not accessible to most, but that was absolutely fundamental in terms of how I was able to be a self-advocate in these systems and then also be supported through understanding and learning the laws."

Other speakers in the doc include Gray's mother, a sexual assault nurse, and two sexual assault survivors identified only as Jane Doe.

Kelly Showker directed and incorporated footage Gray shot of herself on her laptop and phone. Gray said she shot video diaries and wrote detailed journals of her experience as a way of documenting it for her own purposes. She had no idea the footage would one day wind up in a feature-length documentary. "The film not only has empowered me to share my story but a lot of others have come forward as a result of hearing about the film or being involved in the film," she said.

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Montreal Gazette – May 2, 2018 (1 of 3)

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Ottawa Citizen – May 2, 2018 (2 of 2)

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Hot Docs 2018 Interview: director Laura Marie Wayne and subject Scott Jones discuss *Love, Scott*

Andrew Parker May 2, 2018 9:30 am



A work of love, patience, and healing, Canadian filmmaker Laura Marie Wayne's documentary ***Love, Scott*** (which had its premiere at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival this week) takes a look at one man continuing journey to come to grips with trauma following a violent assault several years prior. While many documentaries have looked at the complexity of trauma and PTSD from any variety of different angles, Wayne's *Love, Scott* is something more revolutionary and nuanced. It's an artistically composed conversation about complex feelings carried out between close friends. On October 12, 2013, gay musician Scott Jones was stabbed outside of a nightclub in the town of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia as he was on his way home. The assault left Jones paralyzed from the waist down, and with a lengthy physical and mental recovery ahead. Scott's attacker was apprehended and convicted of attempted murder, but the case was never handled as a hate crime, despite Jones' sexual orientation playing a large motivation in the assault.

Love, Scott is the result of Wayne – one of Scott's closest friends for over a decade – spending a great deal of time with her subject and allowing him to convey his complex feelings in a patient, therapeutic manner. Outside of sharing her own thoughts on what Scott and his traumatic journey means to her as a friend, Wayne allows Jones ample time and a safe space to talk about his life and emotional well being without coaxing answers out of him. Frequently employing long takes where Scott is simply allowed to be himself instead of just another interview subject, it's a rare, raw, unfiltered, and indispensable look at a fraught, but hopeful healing process.

We sat down with Scott, who's currently pursuing his masters and PhD in musical education at the University of Toronto, and Wayne on the week of the film's premiere to talk about their film's unforced tone, their collaborative process, and why their friendship made the movie possible.

This is a film where Scott gets to tell his story in a relatively uninterrupted fashion. There are a lot of moments where you guys allow a lot of time and space for hard answers to be given, and the approach is remarkably patient and resonant. It really allows for the viewer, and for Scott, to get to the heart of the trauma he has suffered in an attempt to put it into words. For both of you, was this a freeing experience to just sort of let the feelings flow?

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Laura Marie Wayne

Laura Marie Wayne: Absolutely. For me, that was clear from the beginning, Because of the nature of what we were going to be talking about, it was important that Scott had space for whatever needed to come up. And even though what you see in the film might be Scott expressing his thoughts in an unbroken fashion for two minutes or so, that might have only come after about an hour or two of warming up to that point.

I wanted to just be a listener, but every now and then I would ask a question to try and get things going. We would start by having conversations, and to do that the space was very important. I was very clear from the beginning that we weren't going to be doing lots of cuts. There were two styles that I always wanted to go together in the film. The first was this dreamy sort of film where we could play around with different aesthetics, and the other is the time that we spend directly with Scott. And in those moments with Scott, we're really WITH Scott.

Scott Jones: I think if you've ever seen any of Laura's other work, you'll know that's she's very much against making lots of cuts. (laughs) Even watching a movie with Laura, she'll often ask out loud, "Why can't they just have a single, solid frame on a person and just leave it there?"

I will admit that I do find it distracting in a documentary when someone is talking to the camera, but they're actually talking to several different cameras that are shooting the interview from different angles. I always thought that was really unnecessary.

Laura Marie Wayne: (laughs) Do you know how many people do that? It happens in every kind of movie. Lots of people think that they absolutely need to have at least a two camera set-up for everything, and for something as simple as an interview, you almost never do. I also think that it ruins the intimacy. If we had a larger crew, we could have had all three angles of Scott driving in a car, but I don't think we would have had the same private and intimate space between us.



Scott Jones

Scott, was it good for you to be in an environment like this to get your story out, or was this a process where you had to learn a bit of patience? I can imagine that it's very different talking to someone about what happened one-on-one in front of a camera than it is to talk about the same things in a more traditionally therapeutic setting.

Scott Jones: The camera did add a little bit of difficulty for me at the start, for sure, but I also think this would have been a very different experience if the person on the other side of the camera was someone other than Laura. If this was someone that I didn't know at all, I don't know if it would have had the same effect on me, but it definitely wouldn't have been the same overall experience. Having a relationship with Laura over the past twelve years made this such a cathartic experience. I had counsellors and therapists that I could always talk to, but it was always valuable to me that I had this one friendship where, regardless of the camera, I could go deep into this trauma and what was bothering me at any given time. **It's clear that the process was to never force Scott to say anything if he wasn't ready to say it. For both of you, what's it like to have an on screen discussion in this kind of manner instead of a standard interview template?**

Laura Marie Wayne: First off, I definitely suggest that other filmmakers try this approach. (laughs) To be honest, the filming process was always just an extension of our friendship, so it only felt natural to have these spacious conversations. If I came in with a list of questions, or if I tried to guide things in a certain direction, it would have felt false. I do think that in our first couple of on screen interactions there was a bit more of that guiding to start things off, and looking back on those early days of footage, you could tell that's what we were doing. You could feel it in the footage. You could feel that we were trying to go somewhere specific. It was apparent early on that this wasn't going to be that type of film.

Scott Jones: In terms of Laura's approach, whether she's looking for something specific or she's attempting something specifically artistic, the foundation of all of our interviews was based on feeling the mood and seeing how I was feeling and taking things from there.

Laura Marie Wayne: Yeah. It was always important to go with whatever Scott was feeling and what was happening on any given day. There were a couple of points that we knew we wanted to make about who Scott was as a person, how he was feeling, and the hate crime aspect of his case, but this really was always a film about documenting one person's journey. And when this person's feelings are evolving, the process of making the film had to be evolving with it. It's so much more beautiful to bear witness to this beautiful person's journey than to guide him or ask him a list of questions.

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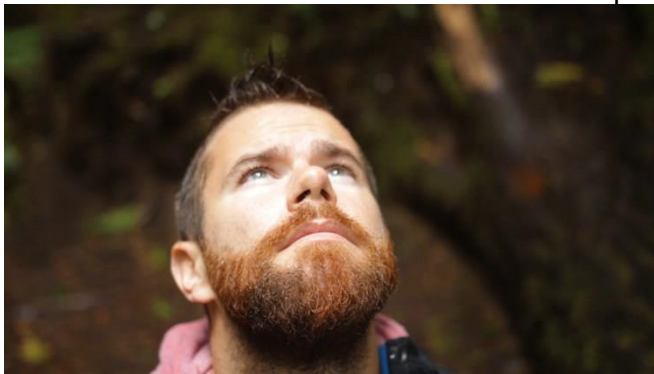
It's definitely one of only a handful of documentaries that benefits greatly from the filmmaker and the subject being such good friends. I think that allows for the conversations you guys had to naturally go in different direction. That probably also leads to a lot of moments where one of you might think a conversation will be leading in one direction before going on a completely different path from where you started.

Laura Marie Wayne: (laughs) Totally. That happened all the time.

Scott Jones: We're both air signs, so that was bound to happen. (laughs) She's an Aquarius and I'm a Gemini, so we're pretty scattered thinkers at the best of times.

Laura Marie Wayne: Our friendship didn't just allow for patience, but also for trust. There was that trust that no matter where a conversation was heading that we always knew that the process was going to work. We always knew that we would take these long roads to get to wherever Scott needed to go with what he was saying, but through this process we always knew that if we were ever going to touch upon something that was too private for that moment that the space was always safe.

Scott Jones: I always felt that Laura nurtured that space and took it very seriously. If I was ever uncomfortable for any reason, I could always tell her. And we did have some conversations around what I wanted to have put on film and what I didn't.



I did want to talk to you guys about how the film uses safe spaces to help Scott tell his story. A lot of the interviews you conducted with Scott take place in the natural world, far away from too many distractions and outside stimuli. And in the few moments where you guys return to a place that could be triggering, there's a lot of space and consideration being given. Was this always an important part of the process for you guys?

Laura Marie Wayne: There wasn't a moment where I wasn't aware that we were always going to be talking about trauma in some way. When we go back to the place where Scott was attacked, the intention was to always talk about this in a way that could be healing and cathartic. It was never going to be about avoiding it, exploiting it, or keeping everything at a surface level, so those kinds of moments where we have to do something like that had to be about gently bringing things to the surface. There's a lot of healing power in just being heard, and no matter where we went or what we were talking about, it was always important to create a space where I could listen.

I feel like, in a way, I was a protector. I don't know how you felt, but I thought that it was important to have that safe space. I think where my protective instincts kicked in was whenever I thought there was going to be outside voices or sources unwittingly having an input on what we were doing and saying. I think a lot of the film was designed, in a way, to

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minimize those outside voices to keep the focus on Scott and his healing. Because of the sensitive nature of what we were talking about, I was always particular on who became a part of the project and when they did.

My loyalty was always to Scott and his story, rather than to the film itself, and I think some of those locations and our conversations are a big part of that. I always saw the film as a tool. The better way to say it is that I never thought this was a film ABOUT Scott, but rather as a film WITH Scott. It's something we were doing together, and in that sense it demands a different set of ethics and a different process, if that makes any sense. It's coming from the two of us, and rather than looking at Scott from the outside, it was more about bringing his truth out into the world in the most powerful way possible.

Scott Jones: It goes back to what you were saying at the beginning about making sure nothing felt forced. Sometimes you watch films, and you realize that there's a definite narrative that's being laid out by the filmmaker and the filmmaker alone, and there's a certain amount of control with that. But I definitely never felt controlled or forced wherever I went to get to a specific point, or even to talk at all if I didn't want to that day.

Laura Marie Wayne: It's interesting to mention that a big part of the impetus to make the film came early on. It came really because after Scott was attacked and in his hospital bed recovering, there were all these stories in the media about what had happened, and they were creating their own version of what happened. Then later on, the justice system created their narrative of what happened. And where was Scott's voice in all of that? So many things had been taken from him in that moment, but not his truth, his voice, and his authority over on how the story should be told and what happened. The film was always borne from the intention to show Scott as the authority of his own story.

Then, of course, as time went on, I realized that I was in there, too. (laughs) So now I just say this is our version of the story. (laughs)



This is a film that will really speak to victims of any kind of trauma. Usually, people who go through something like this are usually asked the same questions over and over again – always of a strictly factual nature – by the media, authorities, or courts, and it's a very draining experience. No one really asks how you as a victim are feeling, and that can get annoying and disheartening at times, and it doesn't help at

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all with the healing process. Was it helpful to talk about what happened without having to answer the same questions over and over again?

Scott Jones: Absolutely, it was. That feeling of having to repeat yourself goes not just with the justice system and the media, but also working with the Department of Community Services and Victims Services. It's an exhausting process trying to be objective about something so subjective, powerful, and non-linear. Being able to have a space to talk about all of the gray area between the black and the white was helpful for my healing process. And I know that not a lot of people have that opportunity, so I feel incredibly grateful to have worked on something like this.

Laura Marie Wayne: That's also why our interviews could always be over an hour long; to make sure that everything that needs to be said is being said. I remember an article where Scott was named some sort of honorary citizen, and basically the gist of the article said "Scott forgave his attacker and moved on with his life." What does that even mean? That's so reductive. I think it was important to show the bravery and resiliency of Scott in the face of what happened. To tell Scott's story and say that it was something that happened and he just moved on is so unfair.

Scott Jones: I always say that article was "incorrectly reductionist." (laughs) It didn't just reduce everything that I went through to a tiny blurb, but in that reduction it became somewhat incorrect.

This film does leave people with some food for thought surrounding how Scott's attack was never prosecuted as a hate crime, but that it was clearly prompted because Scott was gay. What's it like for the both of you to make a film like this today in an era where similar crimes are taking place and still not being prosecuted accordingly?

Laura Marie Wayne: It took a lot of guts I think on both our parts. I'm proud of what we've done, but also sometimes terrified. It's a strong film about a point that needs to be made about how these crimes are prosecuted. When I first started, I actually interviewed a lot of professors and lawyers and politicians that I thought would help the film in that respect. All of that ended up getting cut, but the process of doing those interviews impacted the final film greatly. What I saw was that it was really easy for people to explain to me why it's so difficult to openly say that what happened to Scott was a hate crime. But what we could do is to show what it feels like to go through something like this and then not have the true nature of the crime named. I think the film can do two things. I think it can show what happens to people on an internal and emotional level when they can't talk about these things in the justice system, and on the other hand to make this known. I don't think the general public really sees the huge gap between what's being felt and what's being named in the public record. That's what this film is pointing at: the gap. In the film, I can't explain all the elements of the gap because that's more for policy makers to look at, but what we can do is point to the gap.

I remember having a conversation with one lawyer who believes that the law is structured in a certain way and that he believes in how it's structured. He said that we should never look to the law as a place for healing. Well, if someone can't look to the law for healing...

Scott Jones: Then why look to the law in the first place? The law should be a tool for change, and healing can't totally come without change.

Laura Marie Wayne: He said that you should look for healing elsewhere because the law has limits for a reason. It's important that the discrimination that someone faces on an

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everyday basis can be wiped clean in a court of law, despite the fact that we have laws that can recognize these prejudices that aren't being utilized or put into place.

Scott Jones: And that's at every level. It's not just in the courts. It's also in how the police investigate these crimes. How are they supporting a community that's being discriminated against? Especially in cases where the community is specifically stating that something is a real problem. We're seeing that more and more, and it's extremely pertinent right now. You don't have to look further than the queer community in Toronto and how they've been treated after trying to say there was a serial killer within their community and not getting support for well over a decade.

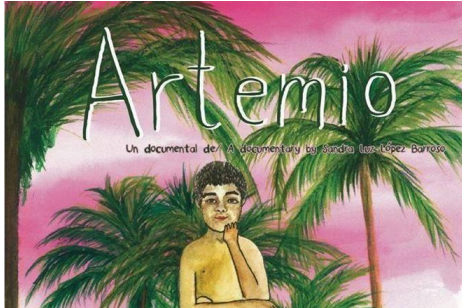
Laura Marie Wayne: In Scott's case, the New Glasgow police saw the outcome as a best case scenario for them. They got the guy, they got him convicted of attempted murder, what more could you want, right? But that wasn't enough for the person who was attacked.

Scott Jones: And it wasn't enough for society.

Laura Marie Wayne: If we can't protect the person who was being attacked, what good are we doing? How are we going to have conversations about this? How are we going to address it? How are we going to learn from it?

Love, Scott screens again at Hot Docs on Thursday, May 3rd at 9:15pm at TIFF Bell Lightbox.

Aplauden en Toronto cinta Mexicana



La cinta cuenta la historia de Artemio Gómez Zárate, de nueve años, quien ya tiene boleto para regresar a Estados Unidos pero prefiere quedarse en México junto a su madre. Foto: tomada de redes sociales

Notimex

Cd. de México (02 mayo 2018).- El documental **Artemio** fue aplaudido en el 25 Festival Internacional de Documentales Hot Docs, que se lleva a cabo en Toronto, Canadá.

La cinta cuenta la historia de Artemio Gómez Zárate, de nueve años, quien ya tiene boleto para regresar a Estados Unidos, donde nació, pero prefiere quedarse en México junto a su madre Coco Zárate, que fue deportada y ahora vive en la costa chica de Guerrero.

Tras presentar la primera de tres funciones Toronto, la antropóloga y cineasta Sandra Luz López Barroso dijo que nunca imaginó el éxito que tendría su tesis documental del Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC).

"Estoy agradecida con el público mexicano porque siendo mi película una tesis del CCC ha tenido un alcance que no imaginaba a nivel nacional e internacional, porque la historia muestra lo que pasa con las familias separadas por una deportación y cómo afecta a los niños", expresó.

López Barroso narró que viajó a la costa chica de Guerrero y Oaxaca en busca de una historia sobre mujeres mexicanas afrodescendientes, pero al conocer a Coco y Artemio se inclinó por contar su historia.

Artemio se centra en la ranhería Cocolote, donde el niño anda descalzo, no va a la escuela y juega con otros niños en terracerías. Aun así, y con un boleto de regreso a Utah, no se quiere ir porque prefiere estar con su mamá y su nueva hermanita, producto de la nueva familia de su progenitora.

"Casi todos tenemos familias fuera, así que la historia resulta muy familiar. En noviembre pasado presenté la película en Washington, junto a Artemio, ahora de 13 años, y el público le

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preguntó sobre los dos países, y él dijo que extrañaba a su mamá, pero que se sentía de Estados Unidos porque aquí había nacido".

Después de Canadá, **Artemio** se proyectará en Ecuador y Escocia. El documental de 48 minutos está nominado este año al premio Ariel.

Hot Docs review: Primas

Powerful doc looks at two Argentine cousins who survived nightmarish sexual abuse as children

BY NORMAN WILNER

MAY 2, 2018

4:14 PM



PRIMAS (Laura Bari, Canada/Argentina). 98 minutes. Rating: NNNN

The latest from Argentine-Canadian documentarian **Laura Bari** is an artful portrait of cousins **Rocio** and **Aldana** – two young women in modern Argentina, each a survivor of nightmarish sexual abuse they experienced as children. Aldana’s scars are primarily psychological, while Rocio bears hers on her body.

Without ever exploiting their pain or their resilience, Bari gives her subjects the space to tell their own stories in the larger context of their own lives, showing us how the cousins have not only survived their traumatic experiences but integrated them into their psyches. There’s some interesting conversation about the new generation of Argentine women being more willing to talk about sexual assault than their mothers and grandmothers, too.

Its final movement takes a wobbly turn to a therapeutic theatre performance, but for the most part *Primas* is a powerfully simple and quietly devastating testament to its subjects’ strength. It’ll stay with you.

May 2, 8:45 pm, Scotiabank 7; May 4, 6 pm, TIFF 4

<https://nowtoronto.com/movies/reviews/hot-docs-primas/>

Review: 'Active Measures'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Maurie Alioff](#) • Published May 2nd, 2018 [1 Comment](#)



Active Measures (USA, 112 minutes)

Dir: Jack Bryan

Programme: Special Presentations. (World Premiere)

Active Measures is so loaded with information that Jack Bryan and his producers considered telling the story in a series. Watching this film back-to-back with *Our New President*, another Trump and Putin horror show screening at Hot Docs 2018, could bring on fear and loathing that even Hunter Thompson might have had trouble handling.

The liberal media speculates about how deep Donald Trump's corruption goes, and the suspicious nature of his relationship with Vladimir Putin. Why is he so reluctant to censure the Russian President's dictatorial rule of his country and undermining of fragile democratic institutions elsewhere? We are used to a lot of "allegedly," and "probably," and "as yet unproven" in the reportage.

Active Measures, on the other hand, goes straight to the jugular. The film marshals a bombardment of headlines, archival footage, and talking heads (Hillary Clinton, John McCain, various former ambassadors, CIA agents, journalists among them) to present its case. Clinton's presence makes me a little uneasy, but Bryan's presentation is forceful and convincing. The doc relentlessly enumerates places and people, calling out the Russian oligarchs and gangsters by name.

The film's premise is that Russia with its relatively weak military must engage in political warfare to expand its power base. It deploys fake news and other attack modes and incites both the left and the right to divide and undermine other governments.

The film recounts the stories of Russian destabilization in the Ukraine, Estonia, and Georgia. Pro western leaders and political candidates got taken down in one way or another. Paul

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Manafort, who happens to be a Trump ally, aided and abetted in the Ukraine where anti-Russian political leader Yulia Volodymyrivna Tymoshenko got locked up. Sound familiar? Trump's vow to imprison, not merely defeat a rival, is one of many ways he seems to be following Putin's Playbook.

One of the participants in the doc says that the top prize for the Russians out to subvert a country is having an asset on the inside. Bryan quotes ex-British intelligence agent Christopher Steele's allegation that the Russians turned Donald Trump long ago. According to the film, he was pressured to run for president as far back as 1999 because he was the perfect mark, a personality type whose insecurities could be manipulated.

The film backs up this "useful idiot" storyline with gales of information about Trump's financial vulnerabilities and desperate need for a Russian cash lifeline, which came from shady people who needed to launder their money. One of the film's biggest shockers is its statement that Trump Tower in New York has been "a paradise for money-laundering." To clean up your dough, you bought a condo from The Donald. The film provides details on how certain schemes worked.

Brian's film is a lengthy assemblage of volatile information, building a consolidation of the case against Trump and Putin we've been hearing about since the presidential election and inauguration. It has a force that is nightmarish: not only is the most powerful man in the world a criminal who ran his operation out of a 5th Avenue high rise, he is the puppet of a tyrant, The Kremlin Candidate.

Active Measures screens:

-Wed, May 2 at 3:45 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Fri, May 4 at 6:15 PM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-active-measures>

Review: 'Grit'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published May 2nd, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Grit

(USA, 80 min.)

Dir. Sasha Friedlander, Cynthia Wade

Programme: World Showcase (World Premiere)

Grit is sure to be the great eco doc of Hot Docs 2018 and the year overall. This powerful film witnesses tragedy on an epic scale as a tsunami of toxic mud displaces over 60,000 people in Indonesia and leaves a flowing geyser of gritty goop scarring the ecosystem. Shot with poetic grandeur and packed with stirring political heft, *Grit* invites audiences to see tragedy through the survivors of a community cast aside by their government, stranded and exiled, as they watch the mud rise over their homeland and engulf the communities they cherished.

Supporters of directors Sasha Friedlander and Cynthia Wade (an Oscar winner for *Freeheld*, which was remade as a drama starring Ellen Page and Julianne Moore) can claim them to be a duo worthy of comparison to Jennifer Baichwal and Edward Burtynsky with this exquisitely shot film that draws upon the evocative power of manmade landscapes to create an eerie tale of what's at stake for our planet. *Grit* finds a subject bigger and badder than the Three Gorges Dam, the steel fields of China, or the blood red river of Sudbury, Ontario, all of which one sees in *Manufactured Landscapes*. Friedlander and Wade focus their gaze on the communities of Sidoarjo, of East Java, Indonesia, where a gas well built by the oil company Lapindo struck an underground mud volcano whilst pillaging resources from the land in 2006. *Grit* explains how this subterranean mud pocket erupted, killed 16 people in a huge explosion, and engulfed just as many communities in a flood of boiling mud. 16 villages lay trapped under 60 feet of mud. *Grit* tells the stories of the families left destitute by the senseless destruction of their homes and communities. The film sees the fight for justice through the eyes of Dian, a sixteen-year-old girl whose family was displaced by the disaster. Dian witnesses her neighbours shafted by their government and played as pawns in a deeply politicized landscape where compensation is bartered and weaponized, making victims out of victims. Dian is a strong character, wise and

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resilient, who sees through the false hope offered by Obama-esque wannabes pandering for votes. She puts her heart into poetry, defying the government and Lapindo for devastating the lives of so many people she holds dear—and she channels her passions into education.

Like the waterlogged citizens in Kiribati in this year's Hot Docs selection *Anote's Ark*, the stranded Indonesians of *Grit* wrestle with the realization that the place they call home has no future. The film scores a sickening interview with an executive from Lapindo, who proudly describes the company's effort to minimize its damages by denying compensation to residents who couldn't prove they lost their homes in the flood. (Many residents simply didn't have time to grab their papers while running for their lives.) Worse is his gleeful recollection of residents who refused to participate in a humiliating exercise where they were buried up to their necks in mud, like 17th century priests coerced to apostatize, to prove their honour and land claims.

In addition to the compelling human interest story in Dian and her family, Friedlander and Wade harness the gut-wrenching visual power of the scarred landscape to forge an urgent plea. The mud continues to rise, and is expected to flow for another dozen years, and *Grit* watches futile efforts of containment and diversion, like pumping toxic mud into rivers, which will only compound the environmental impact. The sad irony of the mud spill is that the cracked and sun-scorched terrain photographs beautifully. *Grit* looks as if Friedlander and Wade found their subjects and airdropped them on the barren land of Mercury. This black scar tissue of the Earth becomes an attraction where models pose for photographs and the destitute villagers scrounge for gems and peddle DVD footage of the explosion to tourists.

The mud site is also a boon for artists. With so much mud flowing from the Earth, one might as well make something of it. The film begins and ends with the image of an installation in which dozens of mud figures stand in unity amidst the rising toxic muck. Their palms face upwards and residents offer tokens of sacrifice as they wait for Lapindo to acknowledge its wrongdoing. The mud keeps rising as time goes on and, like the poor residents dehumanized for the sake of their land claims, the statues are soon up to their noses. *Grit* is another sad story in which human lives are mere collateral damage to a corporation's bottom line.

Grit screens:

-Wed, May 2 at 12:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sun, May 6 at 10:00 AM at Isabel Bader

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-grit>

Review: 'Minding the Gap'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Liam Lacey](#) • Published May 2nd, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Minding the Gap

USA, 93 minutes

Dir. Bing Liu

World Showcase (Canadian Premiere)

Minding the Gap is one of those films that seems to discover its purpose as it rolls along. What appears to start out as a skateboarding documentary progresses, over the course of several years, into a probing examination of heartland America and its troubled masculinity and race issues. Set in Rockford, a northern Illinois city of about 150,000 with a higher-than-average unemployment, this first-person documentary follows three youths in their transition to adulthood.

Zack, a white kid who works as a part-time roofer, is a charismatic, Peter Pan figure, determined never to get old and boring. Keire, is a sensitive African-American teen whose skateboard is inscribed with the phrase "This device cures heartache." Liu is a Chinese-American cameraman, who has always shot the trio's skateboard stunts and tracked them as they zoomed through Rockford's half-empty streets. Each of them left home early because of friction with their fathers or stepfathers. They regard their skate-boarding crew as "more family than family."

When Zack, 23, and his 21-year-old girlfriend, Nina have a baby, they both chafe at the responsibility. The relationship becomes rocky, with drinking, physical violence and then separation. When Keire's father dies, he begins to appreciate his father's rough discipline and warnings about being black in America: Shortly after he gets his first car, he gets a cop's gun pointed at him. And director Bing Liu, in an awkward scene, sets up his camera in his family's living room to ask his distraught immigrant mother why she stayed with his abusive stepfather so long.

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Minding the Gap was executive-produced by *Hoop Dreams* director Steve James and it shares James' ability to place the individuals' aspirations against a hardscrabble socio-economic background. Liu, who demonstrates he's as good an action cinematographer as he is a gutsy interviewer, is a talent to watch. Unless he makes a *Minding the Gap* sequel, he won't find another subject this personal. In one scene, Zack looks at the camera and asks what kind of scene they're shooting: "The one where I pretend you're not there or the other kind?"

Minding the Gap screens:

-Wed, May 2 at 8:15 PM at Scotiabank

-Thurs, May 3 at 3:30 PM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sun, May 6 at 6:15 PM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Review: 'Andy Irons: Kissed by God'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Patrick Mullen](#) • Published May 2nd, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Andy Irons: Kissed by God

(USA, 100 min.)

Dir. Steve Jones, Todd Jones

Program: Special Presentations (World Premiere)

Catch some waves with *Andy Irons: Kissed by God*. This emotional roller coaster of a film breaks through sports documentary conventions and delivers a raw study of mental illness. The film mines a deep archive of Irons' footage to chronicle the rise and tragic fall of the all-star surfer. From the moment the camera opens on his brother Bruce, a former pro surfer himself, who does everything he can to hold himself together while remembering his brother, *Kissed by God* asserts itself as anything but a triumphant hero tale. It's about the pain that goes hand in hand with the glory.

Directors Steve Jones and Todd Jones chart both the parabolic highs and lows of adrenaline-pumping sports and the devastating ups and downs of bipolar disorder that shaped Irons' tragic tale. The violent waves that Irons mastered prove a strong metaphor for his stormy mind.

Bruce Irons offers the key voice amidst a chorus of talking heads, which pepper the archival footage with memories of Andy Irons, who died suddenly in a Texas hotel room in 2010 at the age of 32. The constant voice of a brother's love for his older sibling keeps the film grounded. *Kissed by God* doesn't treat Irons as a saint and the complexity of this story does his legacy more justice in the end. The media reports, featured at the end of the documentary, shrouded his death in sordid mysteriousness. He was, in a way, written off as the Amy Winehouse of all-star surfing, a life thrown away for booze and drugs, but like the ill-fated songstress of "Rehab" fame, Irons gets the full documentary treatment to tell the story that didn't make for easy headlines and consumable news.

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Kissed by God has echoes of *Amy* as it chronicles the scope of Andy's career as a surfer to give audiences the full shaker of the cocktail that killed him. Bruce speaks affectionately of the sibling rivalry he shared with his older brother as they exploded onto the surf scenes as teen., Andy skyrocketed ahead as they entered the world championship tour, winning three world titles from 2002 to 2004. The Joneses cut together an impressive reel of Irons' early career using a seamless blend of footage from a variety of formats, all of which are drenched in the soft Hawaiian sunshine and show the energetic rush the brothers shared as they rode the waves like young gods.

The film delicately conveys the euphoria Irons might have felt at first before shifting to darker times. The footage and interviews tell of a quick tailspin into booze, drugs, and partying—inevitable temptations for a young man launched into spotlight. Add to this hazardous lifestyle the demanding pressure to win, a high-profile rivalry with surfer Kelly Slater, and the grind of celebrityhood, and one sees the cracks in the hero's brave face edited handsomely in the collage.

Kissed by God is an effective study of mental illness and a bold deconstruction of masculinity as Irons' loved ones expose their vulnerability and discuss openly their effort to save Andy from himself. The directors don't shy away from images that show Irons at his worst. The lows are as important as the highs when confronting Irons' addictions including the pain he endured living with bi-polar disorder. The film deals with Irons' illness from all angles; it will friends and family members of people suffering from the same demons to recognize the signs and intervene. The palpable chords of grief and love from the interviewees, particularly Bruce Irons and Andy's widow Lyndie, let the heartache of losing a loved one to this illness painfully clear.

Andy Irons: Kissed by God screens:

-Sat, May 5 at 3:15 PM at TIFF Lightbox

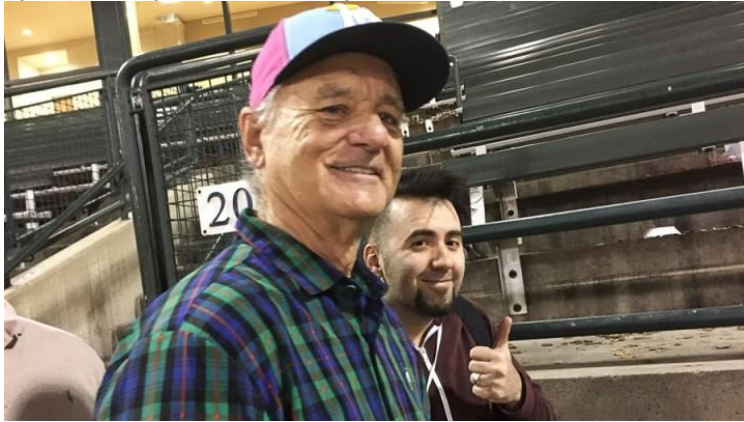
Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-andy-irons-kissed-by-god>

Review: 'The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man'

Hot Docs 2018

By [Liam Lacey](#) • Published May 2nd, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



The Bill Murray Stories: Life Lessons Learned from a Mythical Man

USA. 70 Minutes

Dir. Tommy Avallone.

Special Presentations (International Premiere)

Bill Murray's habit of engaging with strangers in unusual ways — joining karaoke parties, taking a cab driver for a ride or reading poetry to construction workers— has been extensively chronicled on the internet and confirmed by the star. As Murray told an audience at the Toronto International Film Festival's Bill Murray Day in 2014, "it's something I do consciously — when I'm conscious."

Is Murray a subject worthy of an entire documentary? Maybe just a short, facile one. Fan and filmmaker Tommy Avallone's moderately-diverting first-person investigation begins in a conventional way: Avallone attempts to reach his idol by leaving voice messages on Murray's secret 1-800 number (the actor has no agent or publicist) but gets nowhere. Instead, he decides to talk to people involved who experienced Murray manifestations.

This is the sort of low-budget, personal film where plane tickets may be the biggest expense. We start in Charleston, South Carolina, where Murray owns part of a minor league baseball team and a restaurant. Here, Avallone interviews Raheel, a photographer who took a couple's engagement picture, which Murray joined. In Austin, Texas, bartender Trevor recalls the day Murray came in for a drink and a chat, then returned and took over the bar, serving tequila shots to everyone, whether they ordered them or not. One trip goes all the way to England, but in each case the story is similar. Everyone who met Bill was surprised and left with a warm feeling.

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Avallone offers some tentative pokes at further insight. Avallone's interviews David Allen, who writes a column for CNN called *The Wisdom Project*, which compares Murray to a Buddhist teacher, and *Rolling Stone*'s Gavin Edwards, who compiled a book of Murray's fan encounters called *The Tao of Bill Murray*. We also hear from Murray's colleagues at Second City Theatre in Chicago who emphasize the improv principle of saying "yes" to any situation.

The best insight comes from director Peter Farrelly, who points out that Murray's pop-in visits aren't about putting on a performance but having a chance to play with his fans. There's no need to invoke Eastern philosophy to understand how it's a creative kick for him to slip out of his celebrity bubble.

Bill Murray Stories screens:

-Wed, May 2 at 10:30 AM at TIFF Lightbox

-Sat, May 5 at 3:30 PM at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

-Sun, May 6 at 10:00 AM at TIFF Lightbox

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/articles/view/review-the-bill-murray-stories-life-lessons-learned-from-a-mythical-man>

13th Sketchfest officially marks the beginning of festival season

Bill Brownstein, Montreal Gazette

Published: May 2, 2018

Updated: May 2, 2018 8:00 AM PDT



Sketchfest's Spooky Opening Night Gala (Thursday at 8 p.m. at Théâtre Ste-Catherine) will be hosted by organizers Deirdre Trudeau, left, Rena Taylor and Erin Hall. (John Mahoney / MONTREAL GAZETTE) John Mahoney / Montreal Gazette

And Cine Gael closes the 2018 edition with tense Irish drama *Maze*, about the 1983 escape of 38 IRA prison inmates

There are two seasons in Montreal: winter and festival, wherein we celebrate the latter with gusto for six months after enduring the former for six months.

Winter ended earlier this week — or so we are inclined to believe. And summer festival season begins Thursday with the 13th annual Montréal Sketchfest, the city's largest and longest celebration of the art of sketch comedy.

Unlike other festival directors, however, Sketchfest's Erin Hall doesn't boast about this year's edition being the biggest yet. Quite the contrary.

"It will actually be smaller this year," says Hall, who pledges that this will be her last year at the helm. "It's quality over quantity this year."

More than 60 troupes from around the sketch world — OK, this continent — will converge for this year's fest, running until May 12. They'll be coming in from as far as caffeine-addled Seattle, Edmonton and Winnipeg as well as from Toronto, New York and Philadelphia. Nor can we forget our own homegrown artistes, anglo as well as some franco participants.

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“It doesn’t hurt our cause that we come at the start of festival season, and that people are so pumped and happy about getting out for the first time in months that it also pumps up the artists,” Hall explains. “Everyone seems just so stoked. So we like to think of our festival as therapeutic as well.”

For the uninitiated, sketch comedy falls somewhere between traditional theatre and improv, with elements of standup and physical comedy. But unlike improv, it’s generally written and practised before performers hit the stage. Think Second City or Saturday Night Live.

Or as associate director Deirdre Trudeau has so delicately put it: “Sketch comedy is, ultimately, about people’s brains falling open on stage and the performers hoping that people will laugh at that. It’s really rather romantic.”

Needless to say, sketch comedy marries well with brewskis, readily available at Sketchfest headquarters, Théâtre Ste-Catherine, as well as at its other site, Montreal Improv Theatre.

“Sketch can be sketchy, because the performers all have different ways of communicating their material,” Trudeau allows. “We have a lot of collaboration shows and satire this year. The spectrum is vast and beautiful.”

This year’s highlights, according to Hall, Trudeau and the fest’s Outreach director Rena Taylor:

Spooky Opening Night Gala (Thursday at 8 p.m. at Théâtre Ste-Catherine)

Troupes from Montreal, Philadelphia and Toronto mix it up in an other worldly, mayhem-filled extravaganza. As an extra added bonus, the spectacle will be hosted by organizers Hall, Trudeau and Taylor, who will dance while being creepily clad in skeleton attire.

Templeton Philharmonic (Saturday at 7 p.m. at Théâtre Ste-Catherine)

The highly touted Toronto tandem of Gwynne Phillips (HBO’s Sensitive Skin) and Briana Templeton (the Comedy Network’s The Beaverton) bring a blend of surrealism, biting social commentary and dance to the stage. “The most skilled performers I’ve ever seen and so smart and meticulously crafted,” Taylor marvels.

Rapp Battlez (Saturday at 11 p.m. at Théâtre Ste-Catherine)

Toronto brothers Freddie and Miguel Rivas (the latter the co-anchor on The Beaverton) host this mélange of rap, comedy and grand theatrics featuring a who’s who of sketch performers.

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The Province – May 2, 2018 (3 of 4)

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The Province – May 2, 2018 (4 of 4)

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Bill Brownstein, Montreal Gazette

Updated: May 2, 2018



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Meet “Kitty and Ellen,” Holocaust survivors and lifelong friends

See why their friendship is as important as their shared history in the documentary now streaming on Salon Premium

Tom Roston

May 2, 2018 10:59pm (UTC)

The history that connects life-long friends, Kitty and Ellen, two nonagenarian survivors of the Holocaust, is unspeakably sad, but the present-day life that sparkles between them makes Leah Galant's film “Kitty and Ellen” a joyful celebration.

Salon spoke to Galant about how she came upon her inspiring subjects and the importance of filming Holocaust-themed documentaries.

How did you get to know Kitty and Ellen?

A friend of my mother told her that she attends annual trips for healing around the world run by two incredible Holocaust survivors named Kitty and Ellen. When my mom shared this information with me, I immediately reached out to them.

The Holocaust has been a subject of so many documentaries. Can you talk a bit about how you think “Kitty and Ellen” fits with this films?

I'm so happy that the Holocaust is as widely covered as it is because there are so many facets to understanding this period of time and especially the emotional impact. As the election of Trump became a clear arc in my film, it contextualized the friendship of these two women with a foreboding quality. Even though the Holocaust is a major part of the film, at the end of the day, I feel that the story boils down to the friendship of two incredible women.

At some point in the not too-far future there will be no more Holocaust survivors left alive; did that notion influence the film at all?

Unfortunately, a recent study was released that said two thirds of Millennials do not know what Auschwitz was. This is alarming but not surprising to me.

Since I am Jewish, the experiences of my ancestors feel close to home. What motivated me to make this film was the fact that my grandparents died before I could really talk to them about their experiences. Kitty and Ellen are both alive, with so much history, that telling their stories amidst this uncertain political climate became imperative.

Can you describe the animation production process?

I had a whole team for the animation. First, I would storyboard based on what Kitty and Ellen had said. Next, my own mother, Maria Pia Marrella, who is a talented artist and illustrator, drew up all of the visual elements. Then I prepared the elements in photoshop so that my animator, Mandy Wong, would use puppet rigging and After Effects to bring my mother's drawings to life. I was inspired by the film “Bacon & God's Wrath” for this animation technique.

Can you give us an update on Kitty and Ellen since the film was completed?

Kitty and Ellen are both alive and their friendship is as strong as ever. It is unclear if Ellen will be able to make the next trip but since filming Kitty has already gone on two more!

What are you working on now?

I just finished a film called "Death Metal Grandma" about another incredible Holocaust survivor named Inge Ginsberg who at the age of 97 is attempting to break out as a death metal singer. The film had its world premiere at SXSW and will play at Hot Docs. Just as I did with "Kitty and Ellen," I created this film with the support of my incredible mentor Sean Weiner at the Jacob Burns Film Center's Creative Culture program.

Here is the trailer and for more information on screenings for both these films, and for future projects you can visit leahgalant.com.

Spend some time with two adorable, elderly ladies, "Kitty and Ellen," on Salon Premium, our new ad-free, content-rich app.

Tom Roston
MORE FROM Tom Roston

<https://www.salon.com/2018/05/02/meet-kitty-and-ellen-holocaust-survivors-and-lifelong-friends/>

Kehlani and Brandy will headline Toronto Pride 2018

The queer pop star and R&B icon lead the festival's weekend music lineup

BY **KEVIN RITCHIE**

MAY 2, 2018

7:00 PM



Kehlani (left) and Brandy bring stardom to Toronto Pride's 2018 music lineup.

Queer women are having a big year in the pop mainstream thanks in part to Kehlani. The Oakland singer/songwriter has dazzled us at Mod Club and Rebel over the past three years, but extra exciting is that she hasn't been shy in flaunting queer love on red carpets and in songs like the flirty acoustic ballad **Honey**. Though she's always identified with the LGBTQ rainbow, she recently **clarified** on Twitter, "I'm queer... i felt gay always insisted there was still a line drawn as to which 'label' of human i was attracted when i really jus be walking around thinking ERRYBODY FINE."

ERRYBODY FINE could also be the theme of this year's Pride weekend music lineup, which kicks off with a headlining performance by **Kehlani** on June 22 and ends with R&B icon **Brandy** at Yonge-Dundas Square following the Pride Parade on June 24.

Despite being a massively influential voice in R&B, Brandy rarely played Toronto until last year, when she headlined the Black Diamond Ball in February and played Echo Beach in the summer. Her Pride performance means this year's event will be bookended by old-school and new-school R&B.

Other artists announced so far include a lot of hip-hop and experimental electronic acts. International artists include Tennessee rapper **BbyMutha**, who will headline Yes Yes Y'All's

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Sweat block party on June 22, and Bolivian-American electronic producer **Elysia Crampton**, who performs on the Indigenous music stage Catalyst on June 22 alongside rappers **Chhoti Maa**, **Dio Ganhdih** and local producers **Obuxum** and **Ziibiwan**. Also on June 22 is the Alterna Queer stage, featuring dubby Toronto band **Above Top Secret**, Montreal's hip-hop duo **Hua Li** and Iranian rapper **Säye Skye**.

Other stages and events happening on Pride weekend include **Blockorama**, South Asian Express, Yalla Barra, Big Love, Dirty Disco, BlackOut, Fruitloopz, Pan Dulce, Drag Ball and the Trans March after-show, among others.

Pride events are also happening throughout the month of June, but most of the music acts are performing on Pride Weekend, which takes place June 22-24.

PARTIES AND HONOURED GUESTS

Earlier in the month, the fifth-annual art and new media event Nuit Rose runs June 13-17. There are also plenty of parties: RuPaul's Drag Race star **BenDeLaCreme** will perform alongside local queen **Tynomi Banks** at the Cabana Pool Party on June 14; 'Til Sunrise: A Toronto Island Party with DJs **Phil Villeneuve**, **Djon** and **John Caffery** takes over the Artscape Gibraltar Point building and beach on June 17; and Night At The Aqueerium with DJs **Cozmic Cat** and **Lucie Tic** returns to Ripley's Aquarium Of Canada on June 22.

The theme of this year's Pride is "35 years of AIDS activism." Panels and other events will focus on activists continuing the fight against HIV criminalization and stigmatization. HIV/AIDS hospital **Casey House** is this year's honoured group and Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention executive director **Haran Vijayanathan**, who has become an outspoken voice for Bruce McArthur's alleged victims, is this year's parade grand marshal.

Activist **Yasmeen Persad** is 2018's trans ambassador; musician and anti-homophobia activist **Scott Jones** (the subject of a film playing at Hot Docs) is the honoured guest and asexual advocate **Cho Chua** is this year's honoured youth.

For more details, visit pridetoronto.com.



Tanja-Tiziana

Rockers Vag Halen will host a tribute to queer/dyke leather bars as part of Buddies' Queer Pride festival.

GREEN SPACE AND QUEER PRIDE

The 519's concurrent Pride festival **Green Space** is also back at Barbara Hall Park for its 10th year. The DJ-oriented event runs June 20-24 and kicks off with the Starry Night party featuring performances by RuPaul's Drag Race queens **Pangina Heels**, **Miz Cracker**, **Monét X Change** and **The Vixen**.

The Disco Disco party – featuring Drag Race winner and former NOW cover star **Sasha Velour** as well as DJs **Horse Meat Disco** and **Eli Escobar** – moves from Sunday to the Thursday night to make room for circuit party Treehouse, which is relocating from the Ryerson Quad to Barbara Hall Park this year. Visit the festival's website for full details.

Meanwhile, Buddies In Bad Times Theatre's **Queer Pride** festival, which encompasses theatre, comedy, cabaret, art, music and parties, will run throughout the month of June. Performers include chamber-pop group **Queer Songbook Orchestra**, who will play a release party for their debut album *Anthems & Icons*; experimental R&B musician **Witch Prophet**, who headlines *Too Queer: A Bi Visibility Cabaret*; Latinx drag king **Boiband**, who will perform at a karaoke party hosted by **Mel Hague**; and lesbian cock rockers **Vag Halen**, who are throwing a queer/dyke leather bar-themed party featuring performances by electro-power pop artist **Nyssa**, burlesque performer **Dainty Smith** and others.

The programming also includes theatrical works by **Bruce Gibbons Fell**, **Izad Etemadi**, **Johnny Salib**, and a **Playwrights Canada Press** book launch featuring readings by **Catherine Hernandez**, the **Independent Aunties** and **Katie Sly**.

Comedy is represented with the showcases **Bitch Salad**, **Homo Night in Canada** and **Dawn Patrol**. Confirmed acts include **Chantel Marostica**, **Zoe Whittall**, **Vong Sundara** and **Richard Ryder** plus a new show from **Elvira Kurt**. Check out the full schedule of Queer Pride events via Buddies' [website](#).

***Update (June 5):** This story has been updated to reflect a scheduling change in the headlining sets. Brandy will now perform on June 24 at Yonge-Dundas Square and Kehlani will perform on June 22 at Yonge-Dundas Square.*

***Review:** [Kehlani's headlining set was a coup for Toronto Pride](#)*

***Pride 2018:** Check out our feature on the rising popularity of queer music [here](#), a preview of Blockorama's 20th anniversary [here](#), a round-up of the best music acts playing Pride [here](#) and more event picks [here](#).*

Women and Hollywood – May 2, 2018

Liz Garbus Directing Docuseries Adaptation of Michelle McNamara's Golden State Killer Book

BY Rachel Montpelier May 2, 2018

Liz Garbus is taking on the Golden State Killer for her next project. Per a press release, the documentarian is helming an HBO docuseries based on Michelle McNamara's best-selling book "I'll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer." The true-crime story delves into the case of a serial rapist and murderer who terrorized California in the late '70s and '80s. McNamara coined the criminal's title, "Golden State Killer."

Production on the "I'll Be Gone in the Dark" docuseries is already underway. No word on a premiere date yet.

Only recently has the Golden State Killer been identified and arrested: on April 24 police placed ex-cop Joseph James DeAngelo under arrest at his suburban Sacramento home. DNA evidence connects him with many of the Golden State Killer's crimes.

McNamara started "I'll Be Gone in the Dark" before her 2016 death. Her lead researcher Paul Haynes, and her colleague Billy Jenkins finished it, and the book hit shelves this February.

"'I'll Be Gone in the Dark' is a comprehensive exploration of the case of an elusive, violent predator," the press release summarizes. "It is also a haunting personal memoir and self-examination of McNamara's obsessive quest for justice on behalf of the victims and survivors of the crimes."

"Love, Marilyn," "What Happened, Miss Simone?" and "The Farm: Angola, USA" are among Garbus' credits. She received Oscar nods for "Miss Simone" and "The Farm," and won Emmys for the former and "Ghosts of Abu Ghraib."

When we asked Garbus about her thoughts on Time's Up in April, she spoke about the many forms misogyny can take. "It's not about sex, it's about power," she said, "And abuse of power against women takes many forms—from the most violent, rape, to the mundane, mansplaining. It's affecting us on all levels." She was likely prepping for "I'll Be Gone in the Dark" at the time.

The director's latest project, the docuseries "The Fourth Estate," delves into the inner workings of The New York Times during Trump's first year in office. The first part of the four-episode Showtime series screened at Tribeca Film Festival this past weekend and is currently playing at Toronto's Hot Docs fest. "The Fourth Estate" premieres May 27.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/liz-garbus-directing-docuseries-adaptation-of-michelle-mcnamaras-golden-state-killer-book-5631f30e4726/?gi=7b236feb8363>

Right stuff, wrong gender — the true story of the women who almost went to the moon

CBC Radio · May 3



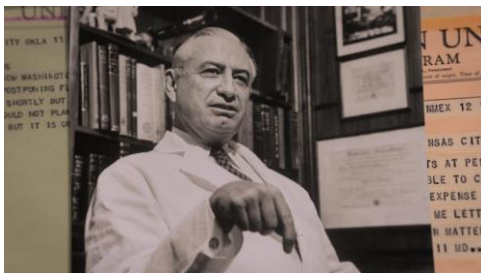
Sarah Gorelick and other women involved in the Mercury 13 project (Netflix)

Listen 13:56

In 1995, when astronaut Eileen Collins became the first woman to pilot a space shuttle, she saved front row seats for some very special guests: a group of 13 women who almost went to the moon.

The Mercury 13, as they were dubbed, were a part of a privately-funded program in the early '60s to see how female pilots would fare taking the same tests as the Mercury 7 astronauts. Even though the women in many cases surpassed the men's results, NASA shut the Mercury 13 program down in 1962, and the world seemed to forget about these 13 women — until Collins credited these trailblazers for paving the way, and brought their story to the forefront.

Now, thanks to a new Netflix documentary, directed by Heather Walsh and David Sington, the Mercury 13 are in the limelight once again.



Dr. Randy Lovelace, the man who designed NASA's astronaut training program and the man behind the Mercury 13 project. (Netflix)

CBC Radio (Quirks & Quarks) – May 3, 2018 (2 of 5)

Started out as a science experiment

The program started out in 1960, after Dr. Randy Lovelace, who designed the astronaut training program for NASA, got an idea for a science experiment. He wanted to see if women could pass the same physiological tests as the men. After all, weight was the biggest problem for NASA at the time, and women typically weigh less than men. His first subject was Geraldyn "Jerrie" Cobb.

Cobb was considered one of the top pilots in the world. She flew her first plane at the age of 12. At 19 she was teaching men how to fly. At 21 she was delivering military planes to Air Forces worldwide. She set world records in speed and distance, and was the first woman to fly at the Paris International Air Show. By the time Dr. Lovelace brought her to his clinic, the 29-year-old had flown 64 types of propeller aircraft, racked up three world aviation records and 7,000 flight hours.



Jerrie Cobb undergoing testing as a part of Phase 1 of the Mercury 13 training program. (Netflix)

Jerrie Cobb passed all three phases of astronaut testing — the first American woman to do so, ranking in the top two per cent of all astronaut candidates of both genders. Lovelace put out a call to more female pilots to see how they could hack it, in a privately-funded, unsanctioned program.

After 700 applications, 19 women from across the country converged on Lovelace's clinic to take part in the first phase of testing: a barrage of 75 different tests, ranging from endurance tests to xrays to more unusual tests like electric shocks to the ulnar nerve in the arm, and

CBC Radio (Quirks & Quarks) – May 3, 2018 (3 of 5)

swallowing a test tube to analyze stomach acids. The 13 women who passed these tests became the Mercury 13.

The oldest of the Mercury 13 was 41-year-old Janie Hart, a senator's wife and the mother of eight children. The youngest was Wally Funk, a 22-year-old civilian flight instructor to U.S. Army Officers. Rhea Hurrle was a schoolteacher, Marion and Janet Dietrich were identical twins. There was also Irene Leverton, Bernice Steadman, Jean Hixson, Gene Nora Stumbough, Jerri Sloan, Myrtle Cagle, and Sarah Lee Gorelick. All accomplished pilots with at least 1,000 flight hours, all wanting to be astronauts.



Wally Funk undergoing testing as a part of the Mercury 13 program. (Netflix)

Phase two of the astronaut testing involved an isolation tank test and psychological evaluations. Hurrle, Funk, and Cobb went first, with Funk getting the overall isolation tank record of 10 hours and 35 minutes without hallucinating. The male astronaut record was just over three hours.

Then, it came time for third phase — aeromedical examinations using military equipment and jet aircraft at a Naval Air Station in Pensacola. But a few days before the women were due to leave, NASA got wind of the program, and told the Navy to pull the plug on the tests.



CBC Radio (Quirks & Quarks) – May 3, 2018 (4 of 5)

Women vying for a place in the space program made the headlines in 1962. (Netflix)

"Let's stop this now"

Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson famously scribbled "Let's Stop This Now" on a memo to NASA about the Mercury 13 program. As "Mercury 13" director David Sington speculates, the pressure was so high to beat the Russians to the moon that NASA didn't want to waste time worrying about female astronauts — and Johnson agreed.

Janey Hart and Jerrie Cobb flew to Washington to try and change their minds. On July 17, 1962 Hart and Cobb testified before congress. Hart's statement began, "It will perhaps come as no surprise to you that I strongly believe women should have a role in space research. In fact, it is inconceivable to me that the world of outer space should be restricted to men only, like some sort of stag club."

But unfortunately for the Mercury 13, the ruling came down to NASA's astronaut recruitment rules. At the time, NASA was only looking at jet pilots to be potential astronauts. And only men were allowed to fly these military planes. So only men could be astronauts.



Jerrie Cobb and Janey Hart testifying before congress. (Netflix)

Although the women made appeals, they were never allowed back to resume their training. NASA didn't recruit any female astronauts until 1978, and Astronaut Sally Ride became the first American woman in space in 1983 as a mission specialist.

When Collins became the first female space shuttle pilot in 1995, eight of the surviving Mercury 13 members looked on as the first female pilot launched into space, proud that their mission had finally been accomplished.

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Correction: A previous version of this story stated that the first woman in space was Sally Ride. She was the first American woman in space. The first woman in space was Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tershkova in 1963.



Mercury 13 members Bernice "B" Steadman, Gene Nora (Stumbough) Jessen, Sarah (Gorelick) Ratley, Jerri (Sloan) Truhill, and Wally Funk at the 1995 launch of Eileen Collins. (Netflix)

The documentary Mercury 13 premieres at the Hot Docs film festival in Toronto on April 27, and is available on Netflix now.

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/right-stuff-wrong-gender-the-true-story-of-the-women-who-almost-went-to-the-moon-1.4636802>

The 2018 Hot Docs Forum report, part two

The 19th edition of the Hot Docs Forum returned Wednesday (May 2) with the final 11 projects of 21 presented to an expert panel. In the second part of realscreen's comprehensive ...

By Daniele Alcinii

May 3, 2018



The 19th edition of the Hot Docs Forum returned Wednesday (May 2) with the final 11 projects of 21 presented to an expert panel. In the second part of *realscreen's* comprehensive coverage of the 2018 Hot Docs Forum, we present seven more projects pitched during the two-day pitching event.

Part one of this report [can be found here](#).

More than \$137,000 in cash prizes were handed out to projects at this year's Hot Docs Forum, which were presented to a room of 475-plus industry delegates, including 220 key commissioning editors and funders.

During an evening reception at the end of the second day, the presentation of pitch prizes took place. The First Look program's top prize of CDN\$75,000 was awarded to Shareef Nasir's *Case 993*, while the program's second prize of \$30,000 went to Nanfu Wang's *Born in China*. Taking third place was Sam Soko's *Softie*.

Meanwhile, The Cuban Hat Award, which offers prize money support for powerful and unique projects, was also presented to Soko's *Softie*. The take-home for this year's award amounted to CDN\$1,175 and US\$267, with Hot Docs matching the total Canadian and American dollar amounts.

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Winning the Corus-Hot Docs Forum Pitch Prize was *Betrayal* from Toronto-based director Lena MacDonald. The \$10,000 cash prize is awarded to the best Canadian pitch at the Forum, as voted on by attending international buyers.

Elsewhere, winning Best Commissioning Editor honors was Marie Nelson, PBS's VP of news and public affairs.

As for the pitches heard on Day 2 of the Forum, Brooklyn-based directors Jeff Reichert and Farihah Zaman presented *Nobody Loves Me*, in which they hope to explore some of the world's ugliest animals; Liz Marshall asked whether lab grown, sustainable "clean meat" is the future in *Meat The Future*; Brett Story revealed an unflinching portrait of climate change with New York as the backdrop in *The Hottest August* (pictured); and Stig Björkman painted an intimate portrait of a media-shy literary icon in *Joyce Carol Oates: I'll Take You There*.

Please note that coverage of the award winners — Sam Soko's *Softie*; Shareef Nasir's *Case 993*; Lena McDonald's *Betrayal*, which won the Mounties Hat pitch; and Nanfu Wang's *Born in China* — has been withheld due to respected publication bans.

Decision makers this year included BBC 'Storyville', Al Jazeera, CBC, Discovery Communications, Film Independent, HBO Documentary Films, Knowledge, The New York Times Op-Docs, NHK, PBS, PBS 'Independent Lens', PBS 'POV', Redford Center, Sundance Institute, SVT, TVO, yesDocu, YLE, and Vice, among others.

Note that dollar figures for budgets listed below are in U.S. currency.

NOBODY LOVES ME

Production Company: NLM Movie

Director: Jeff Reichert, Farihah Zaman

Production budget: \$710,314

Still needed: \$395,314

Logline: In a time of rapidly dwindling biodiversity, the animals that are earmarked for protection are usually those considered by humans to be adorable. But should only the cute survive?

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A subversive nature documentary, *Nobody Loves Me* aims to place attention on some of the world's oddest-looking members of the animal kingdom in need of saving, as filmmakers Jeff Reichert (*Gerrymandering, This Time Next Year*) and Farihah Zaman (*Remote Area Medical*) travel the globe to share their stories with viewers in an intimate fashion. Strange looking animals explored in the "freewheeling, wryly comedic" documentary include the aquatic scrotum frog, found exclusively in Lake Titicaca; the axolotl, a rare underwater species of salamander; Madagascar's aye-aye, the world's largest nocturnal primate; the blobfish, a gelatinous fish that inhabits the deep pressurized waters around Australia; and the proboscis monkey, whose population in Borneo has declined by an estimated 50% in the last 30 years.

Reichert told the table that each animal within the project will receive "the treatment usually reserved for their more attractive, mainstream approved cousins." As such, the filmmaking duo plans to write narration so that the animals can speak to the viewer directly about their lives and communities.

Production on the doc is still in the early stages of development with an expected delivery date set for Q3 2019. The directors have received financial support from an unnamed distributor (\$300,000) and The Redford Center (\$15,000).

Marie Nelson, VP news & public affairs at PBS, noted that *Nobody Loves Me* could potentially serve as a co-presentation between PBS' 'Independent Lens' and 'Nature', but showed concerns about having to push the production values in a nature and wildlife film, whether through a director of photography, producer or cinematographer. "We'd love to do anything that we could do to be of assistance in trying to do some matchmaking to help you along with that part of the project."

Murray Battle, director of independent production and presentation at Knowledge Network, said that while the British Columbia network serves primarily as an arts and culture outlet, that the film "just looks fun and would love to talk."

ARD/NDR's Barbara Biemann, meanwhile, enjoyed the unusual approach and humor attached to the film. NDR, she said, is a network that is deeply involved in blue-chip wildlife and shared similar concerns regarding top quality production value, but noted that if no other German broadcaster jumped on, the team should circle back.

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CRISTIAN AND YIMARLY: REBEL LOVE

Production Company: Lulo Films

Director: Alejandro Bernal

Production budget: \$388,00

Still needed: \$338,000

Logline: Can there be love after the war?

This observational documentary serves as a love story between two former combatants of the Colombian guerrilla group FARC-EP. *Rebel Love* follows Cristian and Yimarly as they turn in their weapons in favor of love while navigating the complex process of reintegrating into normal society.

Jamie Escallon-Burgalia's Lulo Films has contributed \$50,000 to the project's production budget.

Production on the film, which could fit a feature length and television broadcast hour format, began in October 2016 with shooting to continue into the next year. Production is slated to wrap in December 2019. Director Alejandro Bernal and his production team were at the Hot Docs Forum in search of broadcast and coproduction partners.

Justine Nagan, the executive director of American Documentary, remarked that the audience at 'POV' is enthralled by personal stories that capture complex socio-political situations. The characters, she said, are "very charismatic, warm characters that draw you in" and said the film had 'POV' as a potential landing pad.

Chicago Media Project's co-founder and board chair Steve Cohen said that the company had previously looked at film projects focused on personal stories of individuals who were embroiled in similar political conflict and was intrigued about a film that didn't focus domestically within the U.S., but went farther abroad.

Naomi Boxer, documentary programmer with Canada's TVO, echoed comments made around the table, saying that the Canadian pubcaster was in search of documentaries with social context and current affairs, but with a personal way in. And while Boxer believed the characters to be compelling, she wondered how the director would provide context to those unfamiliar with Colombia's political history.

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“Our film is completely focused on the characters and what’s happening with them. I’m not quite sure what’s going to happen to them, but I am completely sure that there will be something happening in their lives in the next six months,” Bernal responded, noting local political uncertainties.

THE FUTURE OF FOREVER

Production Company: Unlimited Film Operations, HBO Poland

Director: Ana Brzezińska

Production budget: \$726,364

Still needed: \$544,700

Logline: A dark road movie delving into the world of life-changing technology. Driven by loss and grief, a young filmmaker searches for answers to some of the major questions about human mortality.

After the sudden loss of her father, director Ana Brzezińska sets out in search of people attempting to “conquer death” by using bleeding-edge technologies. The film chronicles Brzezińska’s journey as she comes into contact with some of the globe’s greatest tech pioneers currently working in the fields of life extension, AI, robotics and space colonization.

The feature-length film, which is coproduced by HBO Poland and incorporates a VR component, is currently in the development stages with two additional filming trips required. It has an expected delivery date of September 2019.

Brzezińska was at Hot Docs looking for funding and partnerships that would help her finish the development stage and subsequently join through production.

The Future of Forever has been thus far financed by HBO Poland (\$100,000), United Film Operations (\$42,364), Polish Film Institute (\$22,000), National Audiovisual Institute (\$14,300) and Documentary Campus e.V. (\$3,000).

The feedback kicked off with Chicago Media Project’s Cohen who appreciated Brzezińska’s candor and honesty in the film. He further noted that the organization has an early stage grant that looks to help catapult projects like *The Future of Forever*, as well as

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innovative outreach impact grant, which is focused on the ways that technology is being used to produce impact for movies.

“I know it’s a little early for the second type of grant, but we’d would like to start tracking you now to talk to you about both grants,” he said.

And while broadcasters like TVO and Knowledge Network seemed keen to discover where Brzezińska’s personal exploratory journey would take her, ARD’s Biemann and Lois Vossen of PBS’ ‘Independent Lens’ needed more clarity.

“I was confused by the teaser, because it didn’t really reveal to me what the film was going to be about,” commented ‘Independent Lens’ executive producer Vossen.

However, it was in the presentation where Vossen felt most connected to the project because the director “revealed how you underwent that change.”

MEAT THE FUTURE

Production Company: Meat the Future

Director: Liz Marshall

Production budget: \$561,308

Still needed: \$228,750

Logline: What if slaughter-free, sustainable “clean meat” replaced conventional meat in the grocery store? Reinventing how meat gets to the plate is a tipping point that could change the world.

Spanning three years, *Meat the Future* serves as an immersive character-driven documentary examining ground zero of America’s clean meat movement, which asks whether sustainable lab-grown created meat can replace slaughtering animals. Through a five-act, dramatic structure, the feature-length film will explore the complexities of industrialized agriculture, spotlight a convergence of urgent issues and zoom in on pioneering change-makers, foodies, activists and critics.

Meat the Future has raised 60% of its financing in Canada, and the film’s team was at Hot Docs in search of presales and commissions from the international market. The project has a proposed delivery date of December 2019.

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The Canada Media Fund (\$150,000), CBC Documentary Channel (\$75,000), Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit (\$74,914) and Canadian Film and Television Tax Credit (\$32,644) have contributed finances to the film.

'Independent Lens' commissioner Lois Vossen noted that while the long-running PBS documentary strand would not be able to board the film for production funding, there is interest in considering it for acquisition due to the film sitting at the intersection of technology, environment and sustainability. She also wondered whether her colleagues at PBS's science strand 'NOVA' would have an interest in the film and would be happy to connect director Liz Marshall with them.

Jenny Raskin, VP of development and filmmaker relations at Impact Partners, however, seemed less certain of Marshall's intentions with the film, stating that the trailer "felt more like a promotion, which can be tricky when profiling a start-up" and wondered how Marshall planned to balance the film.

"We've had a very robust development phase and most of my energy, to this point, has gone into securing exclusive access, and also being there at certain story milestones for character development," Marshall responded. "Absolutely the film is going to include the other side and the complexity of this to present a very well-rounded view of this nascent enterprise."

ARD's Biemann, meanwhile, strongly recommended that Marshall consider producing for a television hour because the film would "market very well across the planet," before adding that it's not something that she would come in on at this point as a commissioner but would consider as an acquisition later on.

Erkko Lyytinen, a producer in YLE's copro department, said that while the subject itself is one of great urgency, he needed to be quite critical of the presentation and trailer: "You said that this film will be character driven, but I didn't get that much about characters at all from your trailer. They were more promoting their own ideas and their own company, so I ask you to focus on the element of drama and on the characters behind the situation – what motivates them?"

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THE HOTTEST AUGUST

Production Company: Walking Productions, Oh Raffface Films

Director: Brett Story

Production budget: \$549,500

Still needed: \$152,481

Logline: A film about climate change, disguised as a portrait of collective anxiety, *The Hottest August* offers a window into the collective conscious of the present.

Toronto- and New York-based indie filmmaker Brett Story was in attendance presenting her third feature-length film *The Hottest August*, an obs-doc about climate change that “blends intimate interviews with artful camera work”. The film, with a proposed delivery date of September 2018, documents climate change without being mentioned through intimate portraits of a raft of New Yorkers living through August 2017, a month rife with tension over a new president, growing anxiety over rising rents, marching white nationalists and erratic weather systems battering America.

Story has teamed with *Cameraperson* editor Nels Bangerter to cut *The Hottest August*, which has a proposed delivery date of Fall 2019.

The project, which was seeking partners in Canada and internationally, has thus far received backing from ITVS (\$300,019), Genuine Article Pictures (\$50,000), Cinereach (\$25,000), Sundance Documentary Fund (\$12,500) and Toronto Arts Council (\$9,500).

Among the executives raining praise upon the acclaimed director was Christopher White, executive producer, ‘POV’/American Documentary, who said that *The Hottest Summer* was a prime cinematic example of “what we love about film”, in terms of artistry. “I also liked the tapestry of human experience you’re finding in New York,” he added.

Adding to the commendation was PBS’s Marie Nelson, who was intrigued to see how the film would ultimately unfold while pointing primarily to Story’s “exquisite use of portraiture.” But the compliment also came with constructive criticism, with Nelson longing to see the significant conflict at the root of an environmental story like this.

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ARTE France's Rasha Salti, who serves as head of 'La Lucarne', remarked that these essay forms are very much what her doc strand is about, but was curious as to how a film about a particular month within a year would age for future generations.

"One of the motivations for making this film was thinking ahead to future generations and what archive we're leaving them," Story clarified. "We see this film very much as working on a level of being a mirror looking back to us, but also as an archive that doesn't just tell future generations that we knew the planet was collapsing but that we had wherewithal to ask ourselves how that affected us and what we were doing about it. We were thinking a lot about making sure the film doesn't get time-stamped in the wrong ways."

Erkko Lyytinen from Finnish broadcaster YLE mentioned he'd previously seen *The Hottest Summer* being pitched in Copenhagen at CPH:DOX and didn't understand it then.

However, after viewing the trailer, he said he fell in love with the material. "This is archive material for the future, and I don't know how you've managed to create that atmosphere because it has the same essence, the same feeling of *America in Color*."

JOYCE CAROL OATES: I'LL TAKE YOU THERE

Production Company: Mantaray Film, East Village Entertainment

Director: Stig Björkman

Production budget: \$1.2 million

Still needed: \$674,520

Logline: Joyce Carol Oates, iconic American writer and witness of her times, takes us on a journey through landscapes, histories and mythologies, celebrating the power of language and imagination.

Seventy-nine-year-old Stig Björkman has once again partnered with the formidable producer Stina Gardell on their fourth collaborative documentary, *Joyce Carol Oates: I'll Take You There*. With full access to Oates's private archive, the feature paints an intimate portrait of the seminal literary and feminist figure and explores the landscape from which she evolved, her personal life, dreams and expectations and the histories and mythologies she's examined.

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Delivery on the project is expected for the spring of 2019 with an updated production budget of \$1.2 million.

The filmmaking team, which has been following Oates over last 16 months, has acquired financial support from the Swedish Film Institute (\$204,545), Mantaray Film (\$100,088) and EU-Media Creative Europe (\$40,091).

As the old saying goes, “Give someone their flowers while they’re still alive,” and PBS’s Marie Nelson believes Björkman is doing just that with the feminist literary icon. “That you have her as an active participant is a gift. She is the ultimate character and there are so many layers to this story,” she said, adding that ‘American Masters’ would be proud to be in conversation with the filmmaker.

Naomi Boxer said TVO would be interested in the film even with PBS’s involvement, and was surprised at how open Oates was in the film teaser because of her renowned status as a media shy author.

Mark Edwards at ARTE France also expressed disbelief at Björkman’s ability to acquire such exclusive access to Oates’ private life. Edwards, however, was curious as to how much more provocative material would Björkman provide for audiences: “Her world is as interesting for us as her practice as a writer; the provocative side, and this notion that reality is full of violence and many stories aren’t told.”

WISHING ON A STAR

Production Company: Videomante, Mischief Films, Kerekes Films

Director: Peter Kerekes

Production budget: \$545,800

Still needed: \$436,600

Logline: A simple yet effective method to change your destiny by taking a trip on the day of your birthday.

Wishing On A Star profiles the lives of four people and the Neapolitan astrologist who believe that chasing a better constellation of stars to a specific far-away destination on their birthday has the power to dramatically change their lives. The film will look to reveal

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the group's desires and hidden wishes, and the human urge to believe in something, all while documenting their worldly journeys and their interactions with the local inhabitants.

The project is currently in development.

Peter Kerekes' *Wishing on a Star* has received financial support from RAI (\$30,000), Media-Subprogram Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency/Creative Europe (\$30,000), Fondo Audiovisivo del Friuli Venezia Giulia (\$14,400), Videomante (\$12,000), Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (\$6,000), Kerekes Films (\$6,000), Mischief Films (\$6,000) and YLE Finnish Broadcasting Company (\$4,800).

'POV' executive director Justine Nagan remarked that the strand's audience is enchanted with memorable characters and thought the whimsy in *Wishing on a Star* in combination with its grounding in humanity and the search for love could potentially work for PBS. "Kudos to the Hot Docs programmers for ending on this film," she said.

Mandy Chang, commissioning editor of the BBC's premier international documentary strand 'Storyville', said that she would like to keep tracking the project as it motors along, while noting that the style and the tone of the film seemed so self-assured. "What a charming pitch."

Chicago Media Project's Steve Cohen, who, much like Nagan and Chang, stated that he would like to keep tracking the film and keep in touch, added, "it's a lovely idea and a lovely project. We really like what we see but it's a little early."

Though equally charmed and impressed, Impact Partners' Jenny Raskin wondered whether *Wishing on a Star* director Peter Kerekes could anticipate what the narrative of each separate character would be once they departed for their journey.

Kerekes responded: "It's very important to see the change of the characters. We'll film them before and during the trip, it will not just be a journey to exotic places – it will be a journey into the soul of our characters."

Lena MacDonald's *Betrayal* named Corus-Hot Docs Forum prize winner

Produced by Toronto's Ferocious Films, the doc nabbed a \$10,000 cash prize.

By Lauren Malyk
May 3, 2018



Director Lena MacDonald and producer Noah Bingham of Toronto's Ferocious Films have won the Corus-Hot Docs Forum Pitch Prize for their project *Betrayal*.

The award consists of a \$10,000 cash prize and is voted on by international buyers in attendance at the Hot Docs Forum, which was held May 1 and 2 in Toronto. The award was handed out by Corus' Andrew Johnson and Hot Docs' Dorota Lech.

All told, over \$137,000 in cash prizes were awarded to projects at this year's Forum.

In total, 21 projects appeared in the program with women making up half of the producers and half of the directors participating. In addition, 20 countries were represented and were presented to a room of over 475 industry delegates, including 220 commissioning editors and funders.

The Forum also handed out a raft of prizes for its **first look Pitch Prize**. The competition, which is in its second consecutive year, supports documentaries that examine social justice issues.

This year's first prize-winner was U.S.-based KTF Films' *Case 993*, directed by Shareef Nasir and produced by Dana Nachman, Leah Mahan, Josh Braun, Dan Braun and Danny Glover. In total, the U.S. project took home \$75,000.

In second place was *Born in China*, directed by Nanfu Wang and Lynn Zhang and produced by U.S. prodcos Next Generation Production and Motto Pictures and France's Pumpnickel Films. It was awarded \$30,000. Producers on the project include Julie Goldman, Christoph Jörg and Chris Clements.

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The third prize went to the Canada/Kenya/Norway copro *Softie*, produced by Montreal-based EyeSteelFilm, Kenya's Lightbox Limited and We Are Not the Machine and Norway's DUOfilm. Directed by Sam Soko, the feature was awarded \$20,000.

Softie also walked away with The Cuban Hat Award, which gives financial backing to “powerful and unique projects.” The award, which was created in 2009, is decided from ballots collected by Hot Docs Forum observers and consists of a cash raised by passing the hat.

Last year, Michal Weits and Assaf Amir's *Blue Box* picked up the **Corus-Hot Docs Forum Pitch Prize** and the Cuban Hat Award went to *306 Hollywood* from New York-based filmmakers Elan and Jonathan Bogarína.

<http://playbackonline.ca/2018/05/03/lena-macdonalds-betrayal-named-corus-hot-docs-forum-prize-winner/>

‘Time for Ilhan’ Takes Lead in Hot Docs Audience Award Contenders

Posted on May 3rd, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Time for Ilhan

By Pat Mullen

Another day another leader! This dynamic year for Hot Docs contenders gets another shuffle as Silence Breakers doc *Time for Ilhan* debuts at #1. Directed by Norah Shapiro, the film is a portrait of Ilhan Omar, the Muslim Somali-American up-and-coming politician fighting the adversity and xenophobia to land a seat in the House of Representatives. The film bumped the Canadian short doc *Prince's Tale* down to #2, while *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* and *Transformer* hold steady at #3 and #4, respectively.

Also new to the race, and debuting somewhat lower than expected given its energetic premiere last night, is the guide dog doc *Pick of the Litter*. The film had the audience clapping throughout the screening as puppies Phil, Poppet, Patriot, Potomac, and Primrose tackled the coursework required to become guide dogs for the blind. The film debuted at #13.

On the Canadian front, *Transformer* continues to hold a steady lead over *The Accountant of Auschwitz* while *Primas* debuts in third (#7 overall).

The top 20 films in the Hot Docs Audience Award rankings are:

1. Time for Ilhan
2. Prince's Tale
3. [Won't You Be My Neighbor?](#)
4. [Transformer](#)

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5. A Woman Captured
6. On Her Shoulders
7. The Accountant of Auschwitz
8. Primas
9. Bathtubs over Broadway
10. The Game Changers
11. The Oslo Diaries
12. The Silver Branch
13. Pick of the Litter
14. Minding the Gap
15. The Silence of Others
16. Letter from Masanjia
17. Exit Music
18. The Guardians
19. Warrior Women
20. Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

At Toronto documentary screening, M.I.A. talks Netflix, borders and biography

By **RAJU MUDHAR** Staff Reporter
Thu., May 3, 2018



M.I.A. is a controversy machine.

The British-Sri Lankan musician and artist born as Matangi “Maya” Arulpragasam, was in town on Wednesday evening at Hot Docs for the Canadian premiere of *Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.*, the long-gestating documentary about her life, and she could not help saying something provocative about one of the biggest players in the entertainment world. It happened following the screening, at a question-and-answer session moderated by film critic Radheyan Simonpillai, with the film’s director Steve Loveridge video-conferencing in from London.

#MIADOC will in World Cinema Documentary Competition on 2018 Sundance Film Festival!!!

After the film provided the audience with illuminating behind-the-scenes context to many of the headline-making moments in the pop star’s life — much of it made of home movies and footage shot by M.I.A. herself, who at one point was an aspiring documentary filmmaker before breaking out as a musician — here’s what she said about why the film won’t be on Netflix, at least for now.

“Even our film, when Steve wanted to sell it to Netflix, they said ‘no one’s going to watch this film because Asians don’t watch films,’ they’re not going to pay for it.”

“I wouldn’t use those exact words, but yeah,” interjected Loveridge. “It wasn’t exactly what they said, just to be clear.”

“He told me that’s what they said,” she responded.

“I was paraphrasing,” he added.

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“Anyways, Steve said that Netflix said, ‘Asian people don’t watch films.’ ”

“I see the headlines tomorrow,” said Simonpillai. (Netflix declined to comment on the record.)

That conversation came in a response to an audience question about whether M.I.A. thought things have gotten better for female artists of colour. Her full reply was long and thoughtful; after oohing at the initial statement, the audience laughed throughout.



M.I.A. was in Toronto on Wednesday for the Canadian premiere of *Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.* at Hot Docs. (GABRIEL LI / GABRIEL LI, COURTESY OF HOT DOCS)

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/05/03/at-toronto-documentary-screening-mia-talks-netflix-borders-and-biography.html>

Five things we learned from M.I.A.'s Hot Docs Q&A

The British-Tamil musician talked Netflix, Ghomeshi and Chinese investment in Sri Lanka at the Canadian premiere of her documentary

BY **KEVIN RITCHIE**

MAY 3, 2018

2:25 PM



Gabriel Li/Hot Docs

M.I.A. chats with NOW film critic Radheyan Simonpillai at the Ted Rogers Hot Docs Cinema.

M.I.A. made it to Hot Docs for her movie premiere after **a 48-hour travel ordeal**. Dressed in a bright orange pantsuit, the British-Tamil musician appeared a bit tired but came through with a lively Q&A with NOW film critic Radheyan Simonpillai following a screening of **Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.**, a documentary about her life directed by her long-time friend Steve Loveridge.

The irony is that M.I.A. never had a problem coming to Canada even when the U.S. wouldn't grant her a visa. "I'm still pay-as-you-go," she said of her travel woes.

The film puts controversial moments in M.I.A.'s career – including the Lynn Hirschberg interview, the Super Bowl bird flip and the **Born Free music video** – into the wider context of her experience as a Tamil refugee who became American-famous and used the platform to call out injustice in her native Sri Lanka in whatever way she could.

It features a lot of self-shot footage of years spent growing up in a tiny flat in a London council estate with her family after they fled civil war in Sri Lanka, and of a pivotal trip she made back there to visit relatives.

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Here are five things we learned from the Q&A at the film's Canadian premiere screening at Hot Docs.

PEOPLE STILL HATE JIAN GHOMESHI

The doc features a handful of archival footage of M.I.A.'s Canadian media interviews between 2005 and 2010, including a cute moment with a group of Tamil girls on a live MuchMusic broadcast and an emo-haired George Stroumboulopoulos describing her career trajectory for his old CBC show.

But when the film cut to M.I.A. appearing on CBC Radio culture show Q in 2010 to discuss her critically panned (and fan-adored) Born Free music video, the audience loudly booed then-host Jian Ghomeshi.

During the Q&A, an audience member demanded to know why Loveridge – who appeared via Skype – would include Ghomeshi in the film even though he's now a pariah in the wake of his sexual assault trial.

"Why *did* you include that?" M.I.A. asked Loveridge, who looked caught off guard.

The filmmaker said the interview was a pivotal one as it visually made clear the emotional toll bad press had taken on her. As the film shows, M.I.A. had produced the video as a way to talk about genocide in Sri Lanka when she was being cut off or silenced by mainstream media outlets.

"You can read a lot of emotion in her face," he explained. "I thought the footage was really rich. [You can see] she feels really battered down.

"I didn't consider taking it out based on [Ghomeshi's reputation]," he said as applause rang out. He then turned the question around: "Why would you take that out?" As the audience member stuttered, M.I.A. jumped in.

"There were loads of people in the film that were not credible," she said, before elaborating on the Q interview. "I was not in a position to speak about the things I was going through clearly with him because he didn't understand it and I was still processing it. That interview was just doomed to fail."

NETFLIX APPARENTLY ISN'T INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING THE DOC

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Loveridge went into damage control mode after M.I.A. pulled a typical M.I.A. move and dished some behind-the-scenes gossip in a throwaway remark.

While talking about diversity in the music industry (or lack thereof), she explained how technology has changed distribution but not the nature of ownership nor the gatekeepers who decide who gets to watch and listen to what. A few streaming platforms have the distribution market cornered and “every venue is owned by two companies. Everything works on numbers.”

Then she added Netflix declined to acquire Matangi/Maya/M.I.A. because “no one is going to watch this film because Asians don’t watch films.”

Loveridge immediately intervened to clarify that when he recounted his dealings with Netflix to M.I.A., “I was paraphrasing.”

“Anyways, Steve said that Netflix said that Asian people don’t watch films,” she added as the audience chuckled.

THE NFL APPARENTLY DROPPED ITS LAWSUIT AGAINST M.I.A. BECAUSE OF

LOVERIDGE’S SPAT WITH INTERSCOPE

In one simultaneously funny and nerve-wracking sequence, the doc covers the moment M.I.A. gave the middle finger to the camera during Madonna’s Super Bowl halftime performance in 2012. The fallout included the NFL demanding **\$16.6 million** for allegedly breaching her contract and for “restitution.”

What the doc doesn’t mention is how the legal wrangling was resolved. An audience member asked for specifics and M.I.A. said the terms of her settlement prevent her from talking about it, but then said Loveridge could shed some light on the situation.

Most people became aware that Loveridge was making a doc about M.I.A. after he leaked teaser footage online in 2013 as part of **a dispute** with Interscope Records. The label was apparently delaying production at the time.

“The NFL got so shaken that [the film] might be a takedown of the NFL, they actually backed out and dropped the lawsuit,” he said.

M.I.A.'S DAD HASN'T SEEN THE DOC YET

After M.I.A. and her family moved to the UK in 1986 she did not see her father, a Tamil activist and revolutionary, for years. He appears briefly in the film in family footage, so an audience member wondered why he wasn't featured more prominently later on.

"He hasn't seen [the film] yet," M.I.A. said. "That would be the next step. He's in Sri Lanka and I'm not allowed to go there because I'd get killed."

Loveridge added that her father can be glimpsed at a charity event near the end of the film, but he cut down footage of a conversation between father and daughter at the same event because the politics they were discussing were complex. Also he had been receiving bad advice from film editors he was showing rough cuts.

They told him: "It's about a girl searching for the love of her daddy."

Cue groans from the crowd.

"No, I know her really well and that's not who she is," Loveridge said he told his would-be mentors.

M.I.A. IS AMBIVALENT ON WHETHER HER ACTIVISM HAS FOSTERED BETTER

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TAMILS AND SINHALESE PEOPLE

Asked whether she's noticed an improvement in communication between Tamils and members of Sri Lanka's majority Sinhalese population, M.I.A. said she's "half and half."

She recounted an anecdote from her 2017 lecture at Oxford University when a Sinhalese student got up and walked out. She followed him to the bar to ask why he left and found him drinking a Coke. "You're not even drinking anything interesting," she told him.

Though 20 years younger than her, the guy would "not address that racism exists," adding that meaningful reconciliation between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka is not happening. She pointed out that the debt-ridden country has been allowing billions in Chinese investment – including ceding control of a strategic port – which critics have said is threatening the country's sovereignty.

Her comments at Hot Docs echoed those voices.

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“The Tamils were the last people in Sri Lanka to fight for the identity of what Sri Lanka is,” she said.
“It’s not just the Tamils that lost, but the Sinhalese lost, too.”

*M.I.A. will attend the Hot Docs screening of Matangi/Maya/M.I.A. at Coliseum Scarborough on May 3 at 4 pm. The film screens again on **May 5 at 9 pm, and May 6 at 9:30 pm, Hot Docs Cinema.***

Bathtubs Over Broadway takes you into the secret world of corporate musicals you were never meant to see

CBC Radio · May 3



Television writer Steve Young with Tom Power in the q studio in Toronto, Ont. (Vivian Rashotte/CBC) The nominations for this year's Tony Awards came out this week, acknowledging the best of the best on Broadway. But would you believe that there are a number of other lavish musicals — complete with catchy songs, choreographed dances and intricate costumes — that were never intended for the general public?

Steve Young, a former writer for *The Late Show With David Letterman*, discovered that companies like Ford, McDonald's and General Electric all had commissioned musicals to entertain clients and investors at corporate meetings. Unable to believe that these secret shows existed, Young decided to make a documentary called *Bathtubs Over Broadway*, which takes you into this mysterious world.



Steve Young in the documentary *Bathtubs Over Broadway*, which runs in Toronto's Hot Docs Film Festival on May 1, 3 and 5. (Courtesy of Hot Docs)

Young joined Tom Power in the q studio to talk about his new documentary and his newfound obsession.

You can catch *Bathtubs Over Broadway* at the Hot Docs Film Festival in Toronto, which runs until Sunday, May 6.

— Produced by Ben Edwards

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/bathtubs-over-broadway-takes-you-into-the-secret-world-of-corporate-musicals-you-were-never-meant-to-see-1.4645152>

No Spring Chicken

A Mumbai family's life with their pet rooster is the subject of Rishi Chandna's short documentary, *Tungrus*

Written by DIPTI NAGPAUL D'SOUZA | Updated: May 3, 2018 12:00:36 am



One day, the patriarch of a family decides to bring a chick home. The tiny bird, a newborn, is meant to be a playmate — a toy, really — for the family's two pet cats. Six months on, however, the Bharde family realises that the scenario has turned on its head. What began as a game of cat-and-chick has become one where the bird, now fully grown into a rooster, is the bully. This quirky situation is the subject of a Rishi Chandna's short format documentary, *Tungrus*, which has been travelling the festival circuit lately.

The hilarious 14-minute documentary, which captures a week in the life of the Bharde family as they deal with an unusual pet in a cramped Mumbai apartment, is an official selection at the prestigious Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival 2018. It has also been selected for Visions du Reel Film Festival, among other documentary festivals.

Chandna knew that the subject lent itself to a documentary as soon as he heard about the Bharde family through a common friend. "It's tough to imagine a rooster as a pet in a city like Mumbai. The stories that we heard from Sameer, the youngest member of the Bharde family, sounded farcical and hilarious. Some members of the family feel that his father had made a mistake by bringing the bird home because the cute little chick had grown to become a hell-raising rooster who claims too much space in their cramped suburban apartment, crows at odd hours and bullies the cats. While the other, unhappy members attempt to make peace with the situation, the father, who decided on bringing the bird home in the first place, believes that any rooster exists to be eaten," says Chandna, recounting the situation that drew him to document the situation.

The bizarre scenario lends itself beautifully to the documentary as the rooster flutters around the house, scares away the cats to eat up their food, messes up the spotless floor with excreta, interrupts family members as they work around the house or just watch television. Instead of following the rooster with a handheld camera, the talented cinematographer Deepak Nambiar captures, in beautiful frames, how the bird disrupts the peace in the house.

However, Chandna admits that the film is driven by more than the quirky setup. "When we decided to document the Bhardes, we were also reacting to the socio-political situation in the

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country. The beef ban had been brought into place and since then there has been an attempt to dictate what people in this country eat, a choice that is deeply personal. In such a scenario, we find that the Bharde family offers a counter argument. Even though it's about chicken here, each member of the family respects the other's choice. The patriarch, Nusrat Bharde, has a rural upbringing and so he is not unused to the bird as a pet that is later slaughtered for its meat. The sons offer a contrast with their urban upbringing and cannot imagine a pet being consumed even though they hate it," points out Chandna. The dilemma, thus, offers an interesting albeit unusual angle to the story.

The title of the documentary is, well, another story, and bears an unexpected connection with Naseeruddin Shah. Chandna says that the only way to shut the rooster up is to chase it around the house, which makes for a sight. "And the job of doing that fell on uncle (Nusrat), which his wife said, reminded her of the scene from the Shyam Benegal classic *Mandi* (1983), where Naseeruddin Shah's character called Tungrus was chasing Om Puri. The moment she said that, we knew that's what we will call our film: *Tungrus*," says Chandna.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/entertainment-others/documentary-rishi-chandna-tungrus-no-spring-chicken-5160666/>

Review: Hot Docs world showcase is a brief journey to the other side

By [Sarah Gopaul](#) May 3, 2018 in [Entertainment](#)

The world showcase at Hot Docs invites audiences to experience how other people live via documentaries that endeavour to portray honest fragments of real-life.

At [Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival](#), the world showcase programme shares stories from other countries that can be shocking and/or triumphant. Audiences may discover how differently people live in another country, or conversely how much they have in common. In the case of the documentaries discussed below, viewers may find inspiration in one man's accomplishment, empathy for a woman's circumstances and insight into a complex economic arrangement.



A scene from '4 Years in 10 Minutes'
Hot Docs

4 Years in 10 minutes

The world is filled with adventure and challenges. While going on long, dangerous journeys is no longer a necessity of life, people embark on these expeditions for personal fulfilment. Often training for months or even years in preparation, these excursions can be the source of enormous satisfaction or disappointment. One of the most energizing and risky of these ventures is mountain climbing. Each year as the seasons permit, thousands attempt to ascend the highest points on Earth for glory and gratification. The documentary [4 Years in 10 minutes](#) chronicles a man's journey to the top of Mt. Everest.

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The found footage film pieces together vintage video and diary entries from the first Serbian to reach the peak of the world's highest mountain. His written reflections overlay images of vast landscapes, consisting of poetic observations and thoughts of defeat. Footage from the campsites shows many of his fellow climbers in good spirits, but he seems to be a little bit of a loner opting instead to ruminate on the impending challenge. Director Mladen Kovacevic attempts to capture the range of emotions the mountaineer experiences as his chances of success diminish.



A scene from 'Vivre Riche'
Hot Docs

Vivre Riche

As the disparity between haves and have nots continues to widen, those in the latter category may begin to increasingly prey on the former as their manner of tipping the scales a little more in their favour. Most people have caught on to the email from the foreign prince requesting money, but they've found more sophisticated ways of conning wealthy targets out of small, critical sums of cash. The internet has changed the nature of scamming, now potentially requiring more time but also resulting in greater payoffs. In *Vivre Riche*, director Joël Akafou demonstrates how this economic structure is playing out in West Africa.

In Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, young men between the ages of 15 and 25 seduce European women online, while convincing them to send various amounts of money. It's akin to prostitution, except that the "janes" or "clients" are unaware they're paying for this companionship. Typing in chatrooms to mask their accent and make it easier to feign interest in these lonely women, they befriend them and then use assorted excuses to explain their need for immediate cash.

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Avoiding phone calls and video chats also allows them to talk about the women behind their backs during their interactions.

The more shocking aspect of these exchanges is the unemployed youths use the money for frivolous possessions, late night excursions and additional internet minutes. Caught up in Western materialism, several young men share what appears to be a tiny, one-bedroom apartment where they sit on their laptops and cellphones anticipating their next payday. But this unreliable method of moneymaking isn't accepted by everyone as Akafou captures conversations with the protagonists' families who insist they put aside their illegal occupations.



A scene from 'A Woman Captured'
Hot Docs

A Woman Captured

In *A Woman Captured*, filmmaker Bernadett Tuza-Ritter follows “Marish,” one of approximately 22,000 modern slaves in Hungary. Her employer/owner, Eta, permits Tuza-Ritter to record Marish in exchange for an undisclosed sum, though her greed and confidence may be her eventual defeat. Marish waits on Eta and her family hand-and-foot plus she works 12-hour shifts at a factory. Eta takes her entire salary in exchange for cigarettes and meagre meals.

Observing Marish's relationship with the family is just like watching a movie about life on a pre-Civil War plantation: the children conspire to blame her when they break things, the other “servant” is only permitted food assigned by Eta, and they're constantly degraded (and sometimes physically abused) by their master who is only kind when it suits her. It's difficult to comprehend such conditions in contemporary society, yet it's apparently occurring to up to 45 million worldwide. Listening to Marish talk about her situation with such defeat is difficult as

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years of being indentured have driven hope away; similarly and conversely, Eta's manner of normalizing the oppression she cultivates while mistreating her captive servants is equally distressing.

Even while trying to maintain her objectivity, Tuza-Ritter befriends Marish and tries to plant the seeds of escape. Yet, the combination of a fly-on-the-wall approach and covert interviews demonstrate Doe is trying directly interfering, but instead asking Marish probing questions that may rekindle her desire to live her life for herself. This documentary is a shocking revelation that relies on its story rather than style to engage viewers.

Showtimes and ticket information can be found on the [festival website](#).

Hot Docs 2018 Review: TUNGRUS, 15 Minutes of Tragicomic Absurdity

Kurt Halfyard

CONTRIBUTING WRITER; TORONTO, CANADA (@TRIFLIC)

May 3, 2:02 pm



"If anybody wants to adopt a rooster, do your research, and as with all pets, be prepared for life to become hell."

Tungrus examines the perils of pet ownership in a middle-class Mumbai flat, when a family adopts a 2 day old chick as a pet. The father thinks it would be a fun playmate (or plaything) for his cats, Ginger and Garlic, but this tiny chick grows up into an adult cock that also happens to be quite a dick. (Sorry for that!)

Rishi Chandna's short documentary has the dryly hilarious tone of a Christopher Guest movie, and the film-language instilled wit of an Edgar Wright picture. It funnels both of the sensibilities into a deeply funny 15 minute study in domestic hierarchy. There is a wonderfully precise comic timing in the editing that accompanies Deepak Nambiar's impeccable (sorry!) interior compositions of a family terrorized by the tyranny of an emboldened chicken, and their crestfallen (sorry, again!) confessionals to the camera.

The father's two sons both have different forms of exasperation and embarrassment with their dad's irresponsible choice of 'pet.' The mom appreciates the comedy of the situation best, perhaps because the rooster doesn't pester her so much as make her husband resemble a

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movie character she is fond of (Tungrus, played by Naseeruddin Shah in the 1983 real estate farce, **Mandi**, a simple but kind helper in an awkward neighborhood situation).

And then the notion of what to do with the fully grown rooster in such a compact living space? Differing opinions on whether the family should eat the bird, while the camera rack focuses from the oblivious rooster to the 'chicken shop' abattoir at the base of the building. That's a hell of a demotion, from loved pet to Sunday meal. In the meantime, constant crowing, not at the crack of dawn, but whenever the bird darn well feels, does not endear the family to the neighbors. The film also gives a sense of just how many times a day a rooster defecates, and what it entails to constantly clean it up. (And begs the question on whether the maid, also featured in the film, will join the family for Sunday dinner?)

The jump in just a few generations from rural life to suburban middle class existence, along with a ban on beef (Hindu politics in Mumbai), simmer in the background of the film while we get to watch an entitled rooster be an asshole to his loving family that may or may not eat him. Absurdist Tragi-Comedy does not get any better than this, and how perfect are the names of those cats who may or may not get the last laugh.

<http://screenanarchy.com/2018/05/hot-docs-2018-review-tungrus-15-minutes-of-tragicomic-absurdity.html>

Hot Docs 2018 Review: SHIRKERS, Weaponized Narcissism

Kurt Halfyard

CONTRIBUTING WRITER; TORONTO, CANADA (@TRIFLIC)

May 3, 12:00 pm



Sandi Tan is the writer, director, narrator, and star of **Shirkers**, the documentary slash true crime story of her first film (also called **Shirkers**) which she made with her high school pals, and a mysterious American benefactor.

The benefactor, named Georges, claimed he was the inspiration for James Spader's character in Soderbergh's **Sex, Lies & Videotape**, but postures like Jean-Paul Belmondo in Godard's **Breathless**. I say true crime because this documentary is a detective story about Georges' theft of the footage of **Shirkers**, the film that was never made.

By virtue of it never being made, and none of the footage ever being screened, **Shirkers** has become somewhat of a legend in certain corners of the Singapore film community; many people had a role in the making of the picture. Twenty years later, Tan has been a film critic and novelist in Los Angeles, and reconnects with all the responsible parties in her homeland to figure out what the hell happened in those intangible dog-days of high school, where everything seemed possible and were full of convoluted drama.

Tan opens the film with a speech on 'Singapore Exceptionalism' in which she infers that 'American Exceptionalism' barely holds a candle to it. She then claims at one point that

Shirkers was poised to be the shining experimental star of her country's burgeoning cinema. When a certain punk-culture magazine shuns her (and her friends) from contributing, she declares that they were too good for the rag, and writes her own damn zine (**Exploding Cat**), and casts the editor of the original magazine as a kindergarden crossing guard in her movie.

Her same friend, Jasmine Ng, who has been, in the ensuing years, successful as a filmmaker in Singapore (**Eating Air, Pink Paddles**), chastises her openly. In one of the talking heads segments of the film to the effect of, and I paraphrase, 'There you go again...making this about you. It feels like we are straight back in high school!'

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This is a pivot-point in the film, where it begins to transcend the mystery of the lost film at the hands of a sinister male role model, into a journey of self-reflection. Tan asks herself, "Am I an asshole?" A healthy question for anyone to ask themselves often, by the way.

The mystery of Georges' (and the original **Shirkers** film canisters) disappearance forms the back-bone of the film -- and I'll not spoil that, which is the obvious hook, and perhaps in light of **Making A Murderer** and **The Keepers**, is the reason Netflix picked up the film. But I did very much enjoy watching the narrative of the film being yanked in the direction to temper Tan's narcissism by feeding her narcissism by reflecting on her narcissism. This is the **Inception** of autobiographies, awash in a gorgeous amount of colourful and misty 16mm footage.

I have always considered the need to mythologize your high-school years a particularly American pathology -- maybe it goes along with the exceptionalism? **Shirkers**, the documentary, makes no bones about it, as clips of **Ghost World** and **Rushmore** abound. Or if you like the idea of community formed through movie making at the hubris of a self-absorbed auteur (not shown, but certainly evoked are **Son of Rambow**, **American Movie**, **Super 8**), then **Shirkers** delivers a 'road trip of the ego' that is equal parts nostalgic and cathartic, particularly so, if you are into Sandi Tan.

Hot Docs 2018 Review: DREAMING MURAKAMI, Found In Translation

Kurt Halfyard

CONTRIBUTING WRITER; TORONTO, CANADA (@TRIFLIC)

May 3, 11:00 am



The perfect sentence does not exist. Language is a way of thinking, but it is a boundary, not the infinite. Perhaps, there is a perfect thought. Or a perfect dream. There is very likely a perfect musical note. Language remains messy and communication is complicated. These are many of the ideas at play in Natesh Anjaan's **Dreaming Murakami**.

The documentary focuses on Mette Holm, the soft spoken, white haired woman who has been translating Haruki Murakami's novels for Denmark's publishers for nearly the entirety of her career. We see her translating of Murakami's first novel over the course of the film, which is as loaded a title as any (English title: **Hear The Wind Sing**) for a Japanese novel being reconfigured for Danish readers and being captured on film. There are many conceptual nuggets to be found in translation here.

Anjaan intercuts Holm's process and struggles (one in particular involves learning the minutiae of a pinball machine) with an adaptation of a Murakami short story, **Super-Frog Saves Tokyo**, as if the nuances of translation between ideas and language is not complicated enough, and uses the images of a CGI frog as a metaphor for doing the invisible art of good translation.

There is a treasure trove of Murakami notions and imagery at play, but the film never panders to

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the dedicated Murakami fan; it aims to stretch one's understanding of a body of work that the majority of the readership has probably only consumed in translation.

"It is important that we understand one another. It is a serious manner," says the frog, as we listen to Holm try to find the right word or phrase to capture the essence of Murakami's dreamy prose, particularly when no literal translation exists between two vastly different cultures.

Murakami himself often writes about two parallel worlds; there are many mirrors at play. It is a nearly perfect fit for Holm's academic life with her cats and her university talks, and the unseen Japanese author who lurks in the subject of her endeavours. It is also a love story, of sorts; if your definition of love is truly attempting a deep understanding of your parter.

Part scholar, part stalker, but dedicated invisible artist, she travels to Japan often enough, and there, wonderful scene sees her drinking a lonely cocktail at end of a long bar, while the bartender spontaneously belts out a karaoke version of The Velvets' **Lana** from behind the tumblers and stemware. It is unexpected, almost Lynchian (Roy Orbison on the soundtrack does that) and wonderfully dense. It encapsulates the very rewarding 60 minutes of **Dreaming Murakami** trying to find perfection by embracing all the blemishes of our intercourse.

<http://screenanarchy.com/2018/05/hot-docs-2018-review-dreaming-murakami-found-in-translation.html>

Will 2018 be the best summer for movies? That's the billion-dollar question

By **PETER HOWELL** Movie Critic
Thu., May 3, 2018

An optimist would say that the record-breaking success of superhero epic *Avengers: Infinity War* is a great start to the summer 2018 movie season and a sign of good things to come.

A pessimist would say it's all downhill from *Infinity War*. No other movie is likely to top its global box-office haul, which will hit the \$1-billion (U.S.) mark sometime this weekend in record time, 10 or 11 days after release, with more moolah to come. It's bound to be not just the most popular movie of the summer, but also the year. And remember, this is the year that's already had another blockbuster — *Black Panther* — break the billion-dollar barrier.

Fortunately for moviegoers, the optimists appear to be right — on paper, at least.

Prospects for warm-weather moviegoing this year are significantly better than they were in 2017, a year many distributors and exhibitors would like to forget. The cavalcade of crap foisted upon an unsuspecting public last summer included *The Mummy*, *Transformers: The Last Knight*, *The Dark Tower*, *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*, *Baywatch*, *The Emoji Movie* and much more.

Two of these films, *The Mummy* and *Transformers: The Last Knight*, now rank on my personal all-time Top 10 worst films list. They were part of a distressing run of half-baked sequels, prequels and reboots that looked bad even from the trailers, which are supposed to get you excited by hiding all the bad bits and highlighting the good ones.

Summer 2017 was also overburdened with testosterone flicks, notwithstanding the success of blockbuster actioner *Wonder Woman* and comedy surprise *Girls Trip*.

The situation is much better this year, says Ellis Jacob, the president and CEO of Cineplex Entertainment, Canada's largest movie chain.

"The summer film slate looks very strong and offers something for everyone," he told journalists in a conference call this week. Jacob has more than the usual reason for wanting his prediction to come true, because Cineplex saw a 9.3 per cent dip in theatre attendance in the first quarter of this year. He blames it mainly on "weaker film product," a situation partially mitigated by the success of *Black Panther* and *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*.

Jacob named 10 titles he think will do particularly well at the box office in the weeks ahead: *Deadpool 2* (May 18); *Solo: A Star Wars Story* (May 25); *Ocean's 8* (June 8); *Incredibles 2* (June 15); *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (June 22); *Ant-Man and the Wasp* (July 6); *Hotel*

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Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation (July 13); *Skyscraper* (July 13); *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* (July 20); and *Mission: Impossible — Fallout* (July 27).

To be sure, this list includes the usual suspects of male-dominated action pics, among them the latest *Star Wars* spinoff (*Solo*), yet another Dwayne Johnson chest-pounder (*Skyscraper*) and a Tom Cruise stuntfest (*Mission: Impossible — Fallout*).

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/opinion/2018/05/03/will-2018-be-the-best-year-for-movies-thats-the-billion-dollar-question.html>

Looking for Trump and Ford in the chaotic political blender

By **RICK SALUTIN** Star Columnist
Thu., May 3, 2018



PC Leader Doug Ford attends a rally at Cambrian College in Sudbury on April 11. (STEVE RUSSELL / TORONTO STAR)

I recently watched one of the Hot Docs docs, *The Silence of Others*. Like most classical documentaries, it's about justice, directly or indirectly. It's set in Spain, where aging victims of the fascist era — from the end of civil war in 1939 till the death of the dictator, Franco, in 1975 — still fight for a reckoning.

Some simply want disinterment of their parents from anonymous mass graves, so they can be reburied “together” with family. It's painstaking. They spend years in court, get authority to dig up the scattered bones, sift them like archeologists, then await DNA identification. For what? To be buried again? A dead man's 88-year-old daughter sighs with relief when her efforts succeed: “Poor thing. He spent his whole life underground.”

Another was tortured as a student in the 1960s by Billy el niño, Billy the kid, now retired in Madrid and whose extradition to Argentina for crimes against humanity, has been rejected. He's disappointed but feels better when Madrid city council renames the street he lives on, named for a Franco general, the “butcher of Badajoz,” who had 4,000 people murdered in a bull ring. He'll no longer have to wake up each morning on Calle del General Yaguë.

Are these sheer romantic, idealistic, impractical and in this case, quixotic, responses? I don't think so. You could measure their results in quantifiable, physiological terms: lessened stress, rate of breathing, perhaps extended longevity, better relationships. Quixotic and practical don't exclude each other.

I think this is how people often make political decisions, from choosing to sacrifice your life for a cause to casting a vote in a provincial election: in a chaotic blender of emotion, calculation, ideology etc. There's been a recent turn in the social sciences to “factor in” elements of feeling alongside rational self-interest in areas like economics.

Toronto Star – May 3, 2018 (2 of 2)

But only academics, pundits and Cambridge Analytica make these distinctions neatly. If you ask people why they vote as they do, they often say they don't know. Like a U.K. voter who told the Financial Times that Jeremy Corbyn's stubbornness in the face of political prudence is "almost like he can't help himself, which I kind of like about him."

I prefer this model — the chaotic blender — for why voters stick with Trump or are ready to go with Doug Ford, over straightforward explanations such as racism, misogyny, stupidity, privilege etc. In many cases, I don't think it's just a matter of raw emotion or ugly motives taking over. The blender is always switched on. (Nor is Trump the only president who lies constantly, despite the daily lists: presidents normally lie but those lies were treated deferentially until now.)

What has changed isn't the basis for voting but the suite of options viewed as acceptable. That used to mean the main parties and candidates acting within traditional norms. That model ran aground after the crash of 2008, when the parties and leaders capitulated to big money and shamefully sold out ordinary people. As a result, they lost their automatic precedence. New actors and modes of conduct came into play, like Trump and Ford.

What I like about the blender model is it still leaves room for change and for wide swings between options, versus being stuck in a static politics of us versus them. The proof of this is the success of Bernie Sanders and Corbyn; in fact the same voters seem to gravitate to both (so-called) extremes.

Canada's not quite there yet, even with Doug Ford. Look how quickly he reversed himself on building in the Greenbelt, like any pol. Trump might've backtracked but he'd never have admitted it, as Ford did because, "I govern through the people, not through the government." (And he's running to be the government? I used to think of Doug as Rob's brain. Got that wrong, clearly.)

In Joyce Wayne's new novel, *Last Night of the World*, she says, quoting Masha Gessen, that resistance means making a choice even when the options are unacceptable. Her novel is about another leftist generation, Canadian Jews in the last century, caught between Stalinism and a vile capitalism. Her point is: bad choices are still choices, but not choosing at all means freedom's demise.

Rick Salutin appears Fridays.

Read more about:

[Donald Trump](#), [Doug Ford](#)

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2018/05/03/looking-for-trump-and-ford-in-the-chaotic-political-blender.html>

Weekend events in Toronto May 4-6 2018



Top Picks

Date	About the Event	Location
May 4	Stars on Ice After stealing the spotlight in Pyeongchang with their electrifying routines, Olympic champs Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir are here to show off their stuff.	Air Canada Centre
May 4 - June 8	ROM Friday Night Live FNL at the ROM kicks off the season with a night of Bollywood Beats, dancing and drinks spread out amongst the skeletons and artifacts.	Royal Ontario Museum
May 5	The Trolley Toronto's own TTC streetcar gets some love in filmmaker Stephen Low's exploration of trolleys from around the world.	Cinesphere

CBC Radio (q) – May 4, 2018

M.I.A. on Loveridge's new tell-all documentary about her career and activism

CBC Radio · May 4



M.I.A. joins Tom Power in the q studio to share her thoughts on friend and director Stephen Loveridge's long-awaited documentary portrait of her. (Jan Lehner)

1 comments

Listen 23:01

Mathangi "Maya" Arulpragasam, better known by her stage name M.I.A., is talented, charismatic and political — these are the qualities that made her an international superstar, and they're the same qualities that made her a great documentary subject.

Almost a decade ago, M.I.A. gave director and friend Stephen Loveridge hundreds of hours of personal footage to create a documentary on her life, but what ended up on tape wasn't what she was expecting. It's possible that she's still not comfortable with it.

The film is called *Matangi/Maya/M.I.A.* and it takes viewers through her career from aspiring filmmaker to music superstar and activist. As a Sri Lankan Tamil, M.I.A. has become a voice for the Tamil population, and the film dives into some of her controversies and run-ins with journalists.

M.I.A. joins Tom Power for a chat about the film and shares her thoughts on what it's like seeing her life reflected back to her on the big screen.

Matangi/Maya/M.I.A. is currently at the Hot Docs Film Festival in Toronto, which runs until May 6.

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/q/thursday-may-3-2018-m-i-a-david-usheer-and-more-1.4645046/m-i-a-on-loveridge-s-new-tell-all-documentary-about-her-career-and-activism-1.4645142>



38 Shares

VIDEO

'The Cleaners' Who Scrub Social Media

Posted: May 04, 2018 8:28 PM ET | Last Updated: May 5



Social media platforms say they want to scrub fake news and inappropriate content off their platforms. Find out who's doing some of the work of actually cleaning it up. (Credit: Blue Ice Docs) Watch The Investigators Saturdays at 9:30 pm ET and Sundays at 5:30 pm ET on CBC News Network. 7:37

Ugly Animals, Balloon Wars, and Malcolm X: The Top 10 Projects of the Hot Docs Pitch Forum

This year's program included 21 projects, with pitch teams allowed seven minutes persuade potential funders to get on board their new films.

Anthony Kaufman

May 4, 2018 3:58 pm



On the scene at Hot Docs

T. Andrew Morton

At the the Hot Docs Pitch Forum, dozens of nonfiction decision-makers assemble at a grand wooden table to hear filmmakers' seven-minute pleas to join their ranks. However, the world's most important doc backer didn't hear the pitches; Netflix's Jason Spingarn-Koff was just outside Hart House Great Hall, darting about as he talked intensely or rapidly texted on his cellphone, swooping in to talk briefly to filmmakers before disappearing into a back-room meeting.

Netflix's global dominance has diminished the importance of the attending broadcasters, funders, commissioning editors, and public media at the Hot Docs Pitch Forum, which has generated millions of dollars for docs-in-progress over nearly two decades. However, companies ranging from ITVS and ZDF are still vital, especially for documentaries that found their all-important start-up financing from a broadcaster — and therefore ineligible for Netflix consideration.

Indie Wire – May 4, 2018 (2 of 4)

And, with Netflix buying fewer finished docs, the only way many docs can recoup their budgets is by cobbling together domestic deals with public media and international licenses at, say, \$25,000-\$50,000 a pop from German, French, Danish, Canadian and Italian TV stations.

IndieWire attended the forum and identified 10 of the strongest pitches, all of which centered on captivating central characters with stories driven by personal plights, passions, and conflicts.

“Born in China.” The new film from Nanfu Wang (“Hooligan Sparrow,” “I Am Another You”) was the most unanimously championed project; already supported by ITVS and Independent Lens and backed by Oscar-nominated producer Julie Goldman (“Life, Animated,” “Abacas”), the film chronicles the consequences of China’s One-Child Policy, mixing Wang’s own feelings as a new mother with the untold stories of those forever shaped by China’s massive social experiment. After seeing the pitch, broadcasters such as BBC, yesDocu (Israel), and NRD Germany also showed newfound enthusiasm for the project. The film received \$30,000 from Laurie David and the Chicago Media Project’s First Look Prize; expect a 2019 Sundance launch.



Nanfu Wang

Courtesy of filmmaker

“Mirror Mirror on the Wall.” Also set in China, director Sascha Schoberl’s “Mirror Mirror on the Wall” was this year’s most shocking project. Described as a tale about vanity and self-glorification set against the backdrop of China’s digital age, the film follows a plastic surgeon and self-proclaimed artist who live-streams plastic surgery, boosting his own and his patients’ fame. The project’s provocative promo reel yielded audible gasps and gaping mouths, as certain commissioning editors appeared wary of the project’s ethical challenges (Said BBC Storyville

Indie Wire – May 4, 2018 (3 of 4)

producer Mandy Chang, “I don’t know if I want to see a film about such an extreme narcissist.”) But other broadcasters showed interest, from Norway, Finland, and PBS’ Marie Nelson, who noted that the project “speaks to a very deep aspect of our culture.”

“The Rashomon Effect.” This film from “(T)ERROR” director Lyric Cabral already has producer Jessica Devaney (“Speed Sisters,” “Roll Red Roll”) and Field of Vision on board, including support from the Sundance Institute and Chicken and Egg Pictures. The film is an investigation into the police shooting of Michael Brown from the perspectives of those closest to it, and received enthusiastic support from the table, including Independent Lens and POV, and even international broadcasters, from NDR to Finland’s YLE. But all rights are still available.

“Case 993.” Another African-American story, notably directed by a person of color, Shareef Nasir’s project received the top First Look Prize of \$75,000 as the film looks to shore up financing for a 2020 completion date. A gripping citizen-detective story following the filmmaker’s quest to resolve the contested history surrounding the assassination of Malcolm X, the project was sought by a bevy of broadcasters, including Independent Lens, Arte France, NDR, and Canada’s TVO, who all praised the pitch as “compelling,” with Marie Nelson specifically praising Nasir as the right person to tell the story as “someone who understands the intersection of history and political science and why this investigation is important.”

“Balloon Wars.” Filmmaker Sissel Morell Dargis is Danish, but her scintillating new project “Balloon Wars” came about when she joined a gang of Brazilian hot-air balloon-making outlaws in Sao Paolo. Because of fire hazards, creating hot-air balloons is illegal, but favela residents have taken to the practice as a creative outlet, and an underworld of “balloon gangs” have formed around the country. The film tracks an obsessed young father who sets out to build increasingly elaborate and magnificent hot-air balloons, despite the strains it puts on his wife, livelihood, and his relationship with his seven-year-old son. As Arte France’s Mark Edwards noted, “What’s striking about this is the ephemeral collective art form: It tells the fragility and beauty and energy of what they are doing. I think this is a film that will travel.”

“Agents of Influence” and **“Joyce Carol Oates: Being Witness.”** Both of these projects are conventional portraits: Richard Poplak and Diana Neille’s “Agents of Influence” is a behind-the-scenes look at one of the most notorious spin-doctors and election-riggers, British ad executive Tim Bell, who sold Margaret Thatcher in the ‘80s and helped hack democratic elections in Kenya and Ukraine. And in veteran Swedish filmmaker Stig Bjorkman’s bio-doc of the notoriously press-shy author, Joyce Carol Oates comes across as expectedly feisty, but also amenable and insightful. Many called it a natural fit for PBS’s American Masters.

“Nobody Loves Me.” Irreverent filmmaking duo Farihah Zaman and Jeff Reicher (“Remote Area Medical”) pitched another doc about marginalized communities: This time, about those endangered animals who humans view as “ugly” and therefore remain unprotected. As Zaman effectively closed her pitch, “Will only the cute survive?”

“Wishing on a Star.” Slovak director Peter Kerekes (“Cooking History”) unveiled “Wishing on a Star,” a whimsical look at an Italian astrologist who sends her lonelyheart clients on “birthday trips” to far-flung locations (from Tasmania to Siberia) to find fulfillment. Broadcasters admired the confidently absurdist tone and Kerekes’ self-assured direction.

“The Hottest August.” Acclaimed filmmaker Brett Story (“The Prison In Twelve Landscapes”) brought an exquisitely photographed and poetic meditation on the angst-filled summer of 2017, laden with everything from extreme temperatures to hurricanes to neo-Nazi marches. Edited by award-winner Nels Bangerter (“Cameraperson,” “Let the Fire Burn”), the filmmakers shot all around New York City, creating an archive “for future generations,” in Story’s words, “to show that we knew the world was collapsing and to understand our own paralysis.”

12 awards announced at Hot Docs film festival for documentaries in Toronto



The Canadian Press

May 4, 2018

9:54 PM EDT

Last Updated

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Hot Docs: 'We Could Be Heroes' Takes Top Jury Prize

7:07 PM PDT 5/4/2018 by Etan Vlessing



Courtesy of Hot Docs

'We Can Be Heroes'

The special jury prize was shared by South Africa's 'Whispering Truth to Power' and Italy's 'Wind of Swabia.'

The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival on Friday gave the top jury prize for best international feature documentary to *We Could be Heroes*, a Moroccan film from director Hind Bensari about Paralympian Azzedine Nouri.

The feature, which had its world premiere at Hot Docs, focuses on the two-time Paralympic gold medalist in the seated shot put who found himself abandoned by his national sports federation and battling for respect and equal rights as he prepared for the 2016 Rio Games.

"The Hot Docs community and their support means a lot to our film and the action it requires. As independent filmmakers, we need a launch pad for the stories that change the world," Bensari said after her win.

The fest's special jury prize was shared by Shameela Seedat's *Whispering Truth to Power*, a film about South Africa's Public Protector facing a backlash while investigating former president Jacob Zuma, and Corrado Punzi's *Wind of Swabia*, which chronicles environmental damage to a southern Italian port city.

Elsewhere, the best Canadian feature documentary category saw the top prize go to Yuqi Kang's *A Little Wisdom*, a film about an isolated Buddhist monastery in Nepal. In the same category, the special jury prize went to Christy Garland's *What Walaa Wants*, a doc about a young woman trying to join the Palestinian Security Forces.

The Hollywood Reporter – May 4, 2018 (2 of 2)

The emerging international filmmaker prize in the international category went to directors Elan Bogarin and Jonathan Bogarin for *306 Hollywood*, which tells of two siblings dismantling their grandmother's home after her death to discover her past.

The festival will announce its audience award for best documentary on Sunday.

Edmonton Journal – May 4, 2018

12 awards announced at Hot Docs film festival for documentaries in Toronto

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Updated: May 4, 2018

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<http://edmontonjournal.com/pmn/entertainment-pmn/12-awards-announced-at-hot-docs-film-festival-for-documentaries-in-toronto/wcm/f5e633fd-2049-4f90-8f57-de08d3e99f82>

The Province – May 4, 2018

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THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Updated: May 4, 2018 6:55 PM PDT

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The London Free Press – May 4, 2018

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THE CANADIAN PRESS

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The Chronicle Journal – May 4, 2018

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http://www.chroniclejournal.com/entertainment/entertainment_news/awards-announced-at-hot-docs-film-festival-for-documentaries-in/article_5e49b36f-891d-56a6-ba4a-a7517921a22e.html

A Happy Reality: another weekend of Hot Docs

25th anniversary festival shows films through Sunday, May 6

By [Marc Glassman](#) • Published May 4th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Slut or Nut: Diary of a Rape Trial

For those of us who love documentaries, and even for those who only enjoy them occasionally, this weekend offers a rare treat. It's the closing weekend of the [Hot Docs](#) festival, which is a great time to see films. The excitement of the first days of the festival is gone and the premieres have all occurred. Many of the directors have gone so there are less Q&As. But the films are still here—and that's what it's all about, isn't it?

Just like TIFF or any other major festival that runs over two weekends, the final Friday, Saturday and Sunday are really for the local audience. International film pros are gone, the publicity is winding down but the crowds remain the same as the cinephiles and curious viewers get to see marvelous films that may never be shown again.

What can viewers see this weekend? Here are just a few of the many treasures available.

Friday, May 4.

11:45 AM: [This Mountain Life](#)

View BC's gorgeous but rugged Rockies in this wonderfully shot film by Grant Baldwin. Climbing is really difficult even for the adventurers in great shape but in this doc, we get to follow a mother and daughter—and others—as they struggle through a classic Canadian experience.

1:00 PM: [Anote's Ark](#)

The islands and atolls that make up Kiribati should be everyone's dream: a South Sea paradise. They are wonderful but global warming is catching up with them. The prognosis is terminal. Kiribati will be drowned, under the Pacific Ocean by the end of this century. This doc features the articulate and charismatic Anote Tong, three times president of his country, who has

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – May 4, 2018 (2 of 4)

sounded a clarion call for tough measures on climate change. And he's made Kiribati buy a chunk of Fiji for the time when they'll have to leave their home.

1:15 PM: Harlan County, USA

This Oscar winner covers a major mining strike in Appalachia in the early 1970s. It's a time now past in the US, when unions were still strong and natural resources were being extracted for profit and no one was concerned about ecological consequences. Barbara Kopple's verite doc established her reputation, and deservedly so. Return to the past and hear union songs and watch violent confrontations between workers and the establishment. Do Trump supporters really want to go back to this America?

6:45 PM: *Slut or Nut*

A tough low-budget film about rape and its consequences, this is a Canadian doc well worth seeing.

8:30 PM Laila at the Bridge

When Laila came back to Afghanistan after decades in Iran, she discovered the notorious bridge in Kabul where addicts score and inject heroin. She felt an undeniable impulse to save them and with the help of an older brother, who conquered his addiction, Laila created a camp, where users were encouraged to break free of their drug habits. A wonderful "doc character," Laila and her heroic fight to save addicts is intensely watchable.

9:00 PM *The Cleaners*

Who is actually deciding what images we can see on the internet? Go to Manila with intrepid filmmakers Block and Riesebeck to uncover who is really "moderating" what we experience. This is an intelligent, revelatory, cyber-thriller.

Saturday, May 5

1:00 PM: A Little Wisdom

A funny, gently spiritual film about youngsters learning their faith in a Buddhist monastery, this is one of the revelations of the festival. Two brothers fight and study and grow in Lumbini, Nepal, the birthplace of the Buddha and one of the most gorgeous places in the world. Yuqi Khan's spare, elegant direction allows the viewer to see the contrast between these lovingly normal boys and the quiet wisdom of their elders. Will they grow to be Buddhist monks? Only time will tell.

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – May 4, 2018 (3 of 4)

3:00 PM: The Trolley

Go down to Cinesphere at Ontario Place and see the latest IMAX film for free, thanks to Hot Docs and director Stephen Low. This film lovingly recounts the history of the trolley from its origins and glory days a century ago through the willful destruction of streetcar systems after World War Two brought on by oil and gas companies in cahoots with city administrators to its welcome comeback in many places today. Well worth seeing—especially if you're with your family.

3:45 PM: Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance

Indigenous filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin's masterpiece, this film documents the devastating standoff between the Mohawks, Quebec's police and eventually the Canadian army. The fight between the rights of a sacred burial ground and the desire to build a golf course is so clearly hypocritical by the white settler establishment and, yet, truly armed conflict was only narrowly avoided. A film not to be missed if you're at all interested in this country and the rights of Indigenous peoples.

8:15 PM: Victory Day

What is the legacy of Russia's victory over Germany at the end of World War Two? Director Sergei Loznitsa documents a ritual ceremony in Berlin's Treptower Park, where people sing and dance in costumes in a celebration that is rapidly losing its meaning.

Sunday, May 6

10:00 AM: Grit

The most stunningly shot of Hot Doc's eco-films, Grit shows the devastating effects of a tsunami, which unleashed toxic mud all over an area in Indonesia. Its effects both on the land and some of the people devastated by that day is brilliantly explored.

12:45 PM: Golden Dawn Girls

When the leaders of Greece's far right Golden Dawn party go to jail, the women take over, running things surprisingly well. This doc contrasts their human side as grandmothers, friends and wives with the scary politics they embrace. Then, the men come home and all is indeed right in the world again.

3:30 PM Manufactured Landscapes

One of the best films ever made in Canada—drama or doc—this profile of photographer Ed Burtynsky encompasses politics and aesthetics. Burtynsky's approach, which shows the beauty of imagery even when the subjects—factory labour, imperiled environments—are repulsive is

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – May 4, 2018 (4 of 4)

thoughtful and provocative. This film shows that cultural work, in cinema and photography, is often at its best when it is absolutely engaged with the perils that are plaguing the world.

9:00 PM: McQueen

A great bio-pic of one of one of the greatest fashion designers ever, this film shows McQueen as a tragic genius, who created great work but couldn't handle his own life. A film that should be seen.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

12 awards announced at Hot Docs film festival

WhatsOn May 04, 2018 The Canadian Press

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By The Canadian Press

Penticton Herald – May 4, 2018

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http://www.pentictonherald.ca/entertainment/national_entertainment/article_17b0d0b0-009b-5729-963b-e14cb38033bd.html

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12 awards announced at Hot Docs film festival

WhatsOn May 04, 2018 The Canadian Press

TORONTO — Twelve awards and \$85,000 in cash and prizes have been presented to Canadian and international filmmakers at the Hot Docs festival in Toronto.

The Best Canadian Feature Documentary Award went Friday to "A Little Wisdom," which explores an isolated Buddhist monastery in Nepal through the eyes of a rambunctious five-year-old novice.

The Special Jury Prize — Canadian Feature Documentary was presented to "What Walaa Wants," about a young woman named Walaa who sets her sights on becoming one of the few women to join the Palestinian Security Forces.

"Transformer," which tells the story of a father, ex-marine and world-record powerlifter who goes through a sex change, won the Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award for Michael Del Monte.

The Special Jury Prize — International Feature Documentary was awarded to two documentaries, "Whispering Truth to Power" and "Wind of Swabia."

The \$50,000 award for Best Canadian Documentary is to be announced on Sunday and the top 10 favourite audience films of the 2018 festival will be released Monday.

By The Canadian Press

I Found An SOS Note From China In A Box Of Decorations — And It Changed How I Live

Opinion: In Oregon, among Halloween decorations, Julie Keith found a cry for help from a Chinese labour camp. Years later, it's changed how she shops and parents.

by Julie Keith, Maclean's Published May 4, 2018



Julie Keith, in a still from 'Letter from Masanjia'. (Photo, Leon Lee)

Julie Keith is an executive assistant and mother of two living in Damascus, Oregon.

It was a grey Sunday afternoon in 2011, at my home in Oregon. My daughter was four years old, turning five the following week. For the first time, she was old enough to plan the details of her own birthday party and I couldn't wait to see her excitement on the day. She was born in late October, and so she decided she wanted a Halloween-themed party.

I had actually found most of the decorations we needed to pull off the party on sale at Kmart the year before, and so they were waiting in storage. So discounted were these accessories that I had enough left over to give her three extra presents to unwrap next week — cheapie things, but still, it was exciting.

I walked up the stairs to the attic—my daughter bouncing up alongside me — to unpack what would be the party's centrepieces: a 17-piece "Totally Ghoul" branded set of foam tombstones. I opened the big box and started passing her pieces of the convincing-looking "stone."

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Then, from between two tombstones, a folded-up piece of paper fell on the floor. My daughter picked up the note and handed it to me, thinking it was part of the instructions. Neat handwriting in English and Chinese filled the lined, white note paper; one of the edges was ripped. I didn't know it then, but it would wake me up from my sheltered life and make me realize how much my actions affect people all around the world.

"... If you occasionally buy this product, please kindly resend this letter to the World Human Right Organization," it read, detailing punishments and abuses of people in a place called Masanjia. "Thousands people here who are under the persecution of the Chinese Communist Party Government will thank and remember you forever."

The fall air suddenly turned icy. My daughter couldn't read yet but she could read my face, riven in concern and bewilderment. The letter's steady tone of voice belied the shocking horrors it described. Tortures? Punishment? Innocent believers, put in prison? Thousands will thank and remember me? Who wrote this note? How did it get into this box of Halloween decorations? In an age of misinformation and wild publicity stunts, I needed to verify this before I believed any of it.

A Google search turned up what I hoped it wouldn't. Masanjia Labour Camp is known as "a place of nightmares" among Chinese dissidents, and it appeared the note was going easy in its description. I learned that human rights defenders and spiritual believers such as Buddhists and Christians who won't fall in line with the Chinese Communist Party's way of thought are sent to these places for "re-education," a euphemism for brutal torture, sexual abuse and brainwashing until they sign a contract promising they would change their beliefs.

I realized I couldn't stand by and do nothing. I shared the note on Facebook and with media outlets — prompting exposes and a media firestorm that led to the release of some of China's prisoners and the eventual abolishment of the Chinese labour camp system in 2013.

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Still, I second-guessed my decision afterward. Some people told me that because I publicized the letter, people in Masanjia would be punished, so I should have minded my own business. Had I endangered people halfway around the world, or upset the Chinese government? Maybe. Despite this awakening, I didn't fully understand the consequences.



Julie Keith meets Sun Yi for the first time in Indonesia, and shows him the letter he sent. (Photo, Leon Lee)

But then, years later, I finally came face to face with Sun Yi, the man who wrote the SOS note and risked his life to slip it into a box to be delivered a world away. Sun Yi is a soft-spoken, kind-hearted person who maintained his composure and quiet strength through horrors that one letter could never encompass. He had been detained for two-and-a-half years for practicing Falun Gong, a meditation practice outlawed by the Chinese government. He refused to give up his beliefs, and he paid the price. He was a one-in-a-million person who changed my life forever.

Today, the thrill I had once gotten from the discounted decorations allowing me to buy more cheap gifts for my daughter couldn't feel more dissonant — I now know the human cost of that feeling. I explain to my kids that having a lot isn't important — it's better to have good things. If the hands that made them were treated well, it's more likely the item will stand the test of time and bring good memories. We own a little less, but we want for nothing.

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Now that Sun Yi's letter opened my eyes, I feel changed. I am more attuned to humanitarian news near or far and more aware of the world around me. I think about where things are made and if someone suffered to make this decoration, or my shoes. My children, too, have taken a natural interest in all this. At school, my daughter shared the story of the note and my going to meet Sun Yi, helping to open little minds. The influence it has had on them is something I am really proud of.



Sun Yi, who wrote the letter that found its way into , holds it in Indonesia during a visit from Julie Keith. (Photo, Leon Lee)

I never expected the story to blow up the way it did. Our modern society's attention span is so short though, so I want to keep this story fresh in people's mind, which is why I participated in Leon Lee's documentary and tell my story whenever I can. This is a monumental issue that needs all the help it can get, so I feel it's my duty to advocate.

Every time I'm shopping, I think about Sun Yi. And I implore the people in my community to forego cheap items and to check where they're from. Forced labor and persecution are still rampant, and small acts can lead to big change. If I hadn't reported that letter, thousands of people could have remained locked in Masanjia to this day. It's time for action that opens people's eyes to the horrors that were brought into my home in a package from Kmart — and might be in your home, too.

The story of Sun Yi, his letter, and Keith's visit with him years later, is featured in the documentary Letter from Masanjia, which made its world premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs festival.

<http://www.chatelaine.com/opinion/letter-from-masanjia/>

Hot Docs 2018 Women Directors: Meet Laura Bari — “Primas”

BY Sophie Willard May 4, 2018

Laura Bari made her full-length debut with “Antoine,” a documentary about the imaginary life of a blind boy. The film was shown at 30 festivals around the world and won over a dozen prizes. She followed it up with “Ariel,” which is about a man who rebuilds his identity after a terrible accident, and completed her trilogy with “Primas.”

“Primas” premiered at the 2018 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival on May 2.

W&H: Describe the film for us in your own words.

LB: “Primas” is a poetic portrait of two cousins, Rocío and Aldana, Argentinian teenagers who—in the wake of heinous acts of violence that interrupted their childhoods—will free themselves from the shadows of their past. Traveling in Argentina and Montréal, the girls come of age having revelatory experiences in their everyday lives; learning dance, mime, theater, circus, and visual arts.

They express through their bodies what only their imagination, their unique perspective, and their unshakable resilience can reveal.

W&H: What drew you to this story?

LB: The drive that lives in me is to give voice to common and exceptional people, creating a strong and delicious combination between the possible and the impossible, between the real and the unreal, between the visible and the invisible. [It's] the drive that brings my unconquerable curiosity about how people think [and react] when they suffer the worst crimes. How do they feel, how do they learn, how do they get familiar with how society gives and takes back?

While the girls express themselves in a common project, [they become more resilient].

[I want audiences] to better understand what these two exceptional girls have taught me: how to be a person who survives, and not a victim, and how to keep fighting with a smile.

W&H: What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theater?

LB: My intention is as simple as love is, as inspiring as Aldana and Rocío are, and as strong as expression and creation is—I wish for everybody to respect one another. I want them to cultivate simple respect for everybody: women, men, and children from any social status. Through films, I wish [for everyone's] mind, heart, and body [to] converge.

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How amazing would it be if every day we were determined to take a moment of our intentions to frame a more coherent way to act, to choose, and to build a common and better world?

W&H: What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

LB: Taking the chance to reveal the present, focusing on the transformation, on the change, and not in the past. To keep using a poetic language to build the inner reality in documentary films is a tension. Then, in order to achieve balance between the narrative and the poetic, the synchronicity of these languages give place to digest the horrible aspects of these stories [that I don't] want the girls to keep quiet [about].

It was also a big challenge to keep the emotional balance of each one of us: the protagonists, the team, the families, and friends. I've lived in Montréal for 25 years. In my travels there, I met Rocío at her 15th birthday. Because she is my second-niece, and knowing the tragedy she [got through], I decided to make a film with her.

One and a half years later, I was already filming Rocío when Aldana, 16 years old—my brother's daughter—told me that she was sexually abused by her father. She asked me then to bring her to Rocío's town. That first encounter, that dialogue—even though it is not part of my usual cinematographic language—I shot in one breathless 15 minute take, the two cousins sat against a blank, white wall, and describing to each other the trauma they endured.

It was also difficult to balance the presence of the essay approach with direct cinema, and experimental cinema. I wish to grow as a person, keeping my conviction in film narration form, which is the closest way to maintain prose and poetry. Then, the logic in my creations is [related to ideas as well as emotions].

W&H: How did you get your film funded? Share some insights into how you got the film made.

LB: To start: the Quebec Council for Arts. The Canadian Council of Arts was always present. [Eventually] GreenGround got on board, and the fantastic Andreas Mendritzki and Aonan Yang, and we have SODEC, and Telefilm.

I have to mention the generous collaboration of each member of the team, and external collaborators, who worked for not a lot of money.

W&H: What does it mean for you to have your film play at Hot Docs?

LB: My heart is springing hot hot Hot Docs! This event allows me to keep looking, and I believe that the transformation through art, and the art of transformation, would be impossible without film festivals.

From this perspective, to play at the amazing Hot Docs—one of the world's major events dedicated to documentaries—gives us the chance to share others' films and realities and create a universal link [between ideas and emotions].

W&H: What's the best and worst advice you've received?

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LB: Best advice: A few years ago, I was nervously preparing a speech for the IDFA forum with my producer. [Director] Peter Wintonick walked by, took my papers, and said, “Laura, be yourself up there—we love you because of who you are, and how you make films.” It was recognition from an amazing mentor.

Worst advice: A bad teacher told me, “You should never show your emotions.”

W&H: What advice do you have for other female directors?

LB: Mujeres directoras: never give up; silently follow your intuition; not only double check but always triple check with a smile; the technical problems start with unplugged cables; forget about men/women while you work—conceive of them as a person; leave the sound and the camera on when people don’t see you; work every day on your projects, without waiting for money; film, film, film—your story is going to be told, and we are waiting; work only with people who are respectful and open-minded.

W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.

LB: “Meshes of the Afternoon,” by Maya Deren (and Alexander Hammid).

This short initiates a new mode of expression through film, where the expression is illogical waves of imagination, [and] the subconscious is unrestrained. Deren is one of my favorite woman directors.

The woman—Maya herself—is getting into the house, witnesses a man on the street, and she tries to catch his shadow, and picks up a flower left by him on the sidewalk. She wears pants, as only feminists did at that time [the 1940s]. She gets into the house, carefully observes the objects, and falls asleep. The woman dreams the same dream over and over. Then, the dream becomes a nightmare: the man takes the flower and brings it with him, the flower becomes a knife, she uses it to break the mirror where her face is reflected, and so on.

[Deren] probably made this film to express how frustrated she was being a woman at that time, fabulously expressing this very difficult reality that everyone has: to have dreams and nightmares that come from our experiences. This very active female filmmaker also had to deal with her own psychological problems in her quest: what is real behind the real?

Considering that there are so many amazing women creating documentary, fiction, and experimental films, I chose this short film because it is the first of the director’s work, which is a solid system which transports me to another level of perception. I can then silently think, genuinely feel, and metaphorically express the human factor. The relateness of the emotional structure is present, and opens our own way to see life and creation.

W&H: Hollywood and the global film industry are in the midst of undergoing a major transformation. Many women—and some men—in the industry are speaking publicly about their experiences being assaulted and harassed. What are your thoughts on the #TimesUp movement and the push for equality in the film business?

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LB: You need to watch “Primas,” then!

We absolutely need to speak about horrible things to avoid them happening again; we absolutely need to choose respect, simplicity, and clarity to express our ideas; we absolutely need to stop violence; we absolutely need poetry to be created, to be watched, heard, written, recorded, filmed. We absolutely need to believe in each other.

<https://womenandhollywood.com/hot-docs-2018-women-directors-meet-laura-bari-primas-c62bc551f3f/?gi=84780e79b6ed>

Hot Docs Review: Pick of the Litter [Don Hardy Jr., Dana Nachman, 2018]



Put down your smartphone, and spend an hour outdoors. You'll likely start to notice how modern Homo sapiens are increasingly useless without a plethora of gadgetry to keep track of the minutiae of daily life. What happens if those gadgets now have minds of their own? Do you keep running try-outs until you find the match-made-in-heaven? Will yours be called "Jarvis" like millions other?

Of course I may be talking about artificial intelligence ... but not just yet. Man's best friend is our most ancient, living breathing smart gadget. *Pick of the Litter* follows 5 puppies born in the same litter as they move up through our world, blissfully unaware of their destiny as faithful companions lounging on a sofa all day, working dogs in many other duties, or guide dogs. The non-profit organization Guide Dogs for the Blind breeds, selects and ultimately pairs vision-impaired folks with trained dogs to give them some semblance of normality and mobility. Keeping themselves and their handlers alive being of the utmost importance, guide dogs need to display a certain aptitude, and hence genetic disposition, proper upbringing, and focused training are all necessary components that must be put together properly.

This is a straightforward and delightful documentary. The dogs are the stars here, of course. Details of their training are bizarre yet irresistible. For example, running a sedan directly into the trainer/dog at crosswalks would not have been my idea of experiential exposure – but that is exactly the type of behind the scenes info one wants. And of course, watching the dogs grow and their personalities blossom is immensely interesting. Those faces the dogs make as they (pretend to) ignore cookies placed in front of their snout are quite hilarious to witness. Having never had any pets, however, I don't think I can fully understand how volunteers could be excited about the prospect of raising/socializing a puppy to train-able age, only to cut loose months later. It sounds more than anything like a recipe for heartbreak. It is also baffling to see that, like parents of pre-med students, some volunteers even attach a level of pride and self-worth to whether the puppy they helped raise becomes guide dog. Puerile egotism aside, *Pick of the Litter* is an easy film to recommend to kids of all ages – and all for a noble cause.

Screenings:

Fri, May 4, 1:00 PM @ Isabel Bader Theatre

Sun, May 6, 3:15 PM @ TIFF Bell Lightbox 1

<http://www.panicmanual.com/2018/05/04/hot-docs-review-pick-of-the-litter-don-hardy-jr-dana-nachman-2018/>

Review: Hot Docs doesn't want anyone left in the dark on these issues

By [Sarah Gopaul](#) May 4, 2018 in [Entertainment](#)

Hot Docs knows the importance of documentary-filmmaking and activism, so they're highlighting a few important issues at this year's festival.

While not all documentary cinema needs to be serious or enlightening, these films certainly have an important place in the genre. Following the old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words," a movie can only further illustrate issues not easily explained or provide evidence of an overarching problem. At Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, the "silence breakers" programme features films in which its subjects are drawing attention to topics that require our consideration and demonstrating that there are people trying to instil change. And in a slightly different context, a different political commentary was slipped into the "artsclapes" category this year.



A scene from 'Crime + Punishment'
Hot Docs

Crime + Punishment

Police officers are supposed to "serve and protect," but one more frequently begins to question for who are they working and guarding. While the majority of officers may be honourable arms of the law, the number of "bad apples" in the barrel appears to be spreading — or just becoming more visible. If cops cannot be relied on to do the right thing and support the communities in which they operate, how can they be trusted? *[Crime + Punishment](#)* helps put the spotlight on an in-house issue with disregarded, and in some cases irreversible, consequences for its targets.

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Arrest quotas were banned in 2010, yet arrests and summonses still account for more than \$900 million of the city's annual budget. Consequently and not surprisingly, quotas weren't eliminated — they were just concealed. In response, 12 Black and Latino New York cops filed a class-action lawsuit against the city. They have irrefutable evidence demonstrating their superiors pressure officers into making a minimum of one arrest per day regardless of whether or not a crime has been committed; moreover, they're directed to target predominantly coloured neighborhoods, often arresting the same 15-25-year-old, jeopardizing their jobs or scholarships, only to have the cases dismissed each time.

Of the police officers taking the stand, there are three at the centre of the film: Sandy Gonzales, who is being publicly humiliated by his colleagues; Edwin Raymond, who can't get promoted in spite of his impeccable record; and a pregnant Felicia Whitely, who is bullied into pre-term labour. On the other side of the arrests, director Stephen Maing follows a private detective attempting to help those wrongly charged get justice... or in at least one instance, avoid a prison term. Amongst other things, this film demonstrates unprovoked shootings caught on video is just one facet of a systemic problem with racism and culture that needs to be addressed before any improvements will be seen.



A scene from 'Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial'
Hot Docs

Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial

Although “rape culture” is not a new phenomenon, it's finally getting its due attention on account of a number of horrific and high-profile sexual assault cases. For decades, the responsibility for preventing rape has been placed on the would-be target rather than the perpetrator – slut-shaming and victim-blaming are just some of the things women encounter daily. Girls are fed a

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series of “don’ts” from a young age in order to supposedly protect them from being attacked; meanwhile boys aren’t taught anything about consent. This is gradually changing, but there are many who can’t comprehend the flaw in this logic. These are just some of the obstacles the plaintiff encounters in the documentary, *Slut or Nut: The Diary of a Rape Trial*.

When Mandi Gray was a PhD student at York University, she was raped by a fellow student with whom she’d gone on a couple of dates. While that experience was traumatizing, her scars would be scored more deeply by the process of trying to convict her rapist. From a school administration that failed to provide recourse to police officers that refused to believe her to limited access to a sexual assault nurse to attempts to discredit her at trial, Gray perseveres with the support of her friends and family — but that doesn’t make her experience any less jarring.

For those already informed about the issue, this documentary doesn’t necessarily contribute anything new to the perception of rape victims. Instead, it provides an enlightening look at the never-ending challenges faced by those who want there to be consequences for their attackers. “Implied consent” is a phrase that gets thrown around a lot, while Gray’s rapist isn’t even mentioned in most of the news stories that dubbed her “the face of rape on campus.” Rather than proposing solutions, director Kelly Showker uses Gray’s case, expert interviews and the reflections of Jane Doe (who is represented by an animated fox) to deliver a detailed account of filing rape charges in Canada.



A scene from 'Yours in Sisterhood'
Hot Docs

Yours in Sisterhood

Feminism has been defined and redefined for decades. There are still disputes on what it means to be a feminist, though fairly general and inclusive definitions seem to be the current

prevailing versions. In some circles it's considered a dirty word, while in others it's deemed a requirement of civil society. Over the years, there have been movements, protests and publications dedicated to feminism and its advancement... and now we live in a world once again being awakened to these issues. So how much has changed? *Yours in Sisterhood* explores this question through a collection of never-before-shared letters to the editor.

In the '70s, *Ms.* magazine was America's first mainstream feminist publication. In addition to reading it religiously, it's readers contributed to the conversation via letters written about their personal experiences and struggles with inequality and independence. But of the correspondence received, only a select few were ever published, leaving the remaining voices tucked away in archival boxes never to be heard. However, filmmaker Irene Lusztig is attempting to remedy that for at least some of the writers by reading their words on camera in her performative, participatory documentary.

Each letter is read by someone in similar circumstances as the original contributor — and in a few cases, the author themselves. Shot in 32 states, participants from across the spectrum of sexual orientation, religious and racial backgrounds, physical ability and political viewpoint read the letters aloud into the camera, then compare their experiences to that of the person who composed the letter 40 years ago in the same location. What becomes fairly obvious is not a lot has changed through the decades and a lot of work still needs to be done. This is a thought-provoking approach to this subject and an effective way of engaging people in conversation about these still relevant topics.



A scene from 'Mr. Fish: Cartooning from the Deep End'
Hot Docs

Mr. Fish: Cartooning from the Deep End

While laughter will always be a necessity of a healthy life, its source varies widely. People's sense of humour is subjective and what is side-splitting to one person may be obnoxious to another. Therefore, making a living in comedy can be a difficult, particularly if you have a unique sense of humour that isn't widely shared. However, in addition to the more visible stand-up comedian or the more standard comedy screenwriter, there are illustrators whose bread-and-butter relies on selling their funny or satirical artwork. *Mr. Fish: Cartooning from the Deep End* is about such an artist who's finding it difficult to survive doing what he loves.

Fish began drawing at a young age and the subjects of his work quickly took on a commentary element. Using his talent to question, oppose or simply ruffle some feathers came naturally to Fish... although his style of humour may not appeal to everyone. His cartoons tend to be vulgar and even offensive to some, though they do achieve the impact he desires. Unfortunately, the decline of print media has left fewer paying jobs for a political cartoonist and he's grappling against a need to support his family vs. not accepting work he finds unfulfilling.

Via interviews with Fish and his family and friends, director Pablo Bryant paints an intimate portrait of a struggling artist whose talent is needed more than ever even though there are fewer places to display his work. Time spent observing Fish's wife and their conversations are the most revealing, as she both understands and supports his passion but grows tired of money issues caused by his unstable employment. As Fish's artwork scrolls across the screen, his skills and style are evident... as is the constrained market in which he must try to stay afloat. Showtimes and ticket information can be found on the [festival website](#).

AFI Docs slates “United Skates”, “Personal Statement” to bookend fest

By Barry Walsh

May 4, 2018



Washington DC-based documentary festival and conference AFI Docs has named its opening and closing films for its upcoming 16th edition.

The fest will be bookended by Juliane Dressner and Edwin Martinez’s *Personal Statement* as its opening film on June 13, and Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown’s *United Skates* as the closer, on June 17.

Personal Statement tells the story of three Brooklyn high school seniors who aim to go to college, but lack some of the resources other students take for granted, including guidance counselors. The film follows the students as they learn to counsel each other in pursuit of their goals.

United Skates, meanwhile, comes to AFI following critically acclaimed turns at Tribeca and Hot Docs. It examines the role of roller rinks in modern African American culture, and the current fight to save those rinks.

As well, Rory Kennedy’s *Above and Beyond: NASA’s Journey to Tomorrow* will be the Centerpiece Screening for the event, and four films — Erik Nelson’s *The Cold Blue*, Sam Pollard and Melissa Haizlip’s *Mr. Soul!*, Dieudo Hamadi’s *Kinshasa Makambo*, and Trisha Ziff’s *Witkin and Witkin* — will receive special screenings. Nelson’s film, described as “a meditation on youth, war and stunning bravery,” will receive its world premiere at AFI Docs.

The full slate for the fest will be announced in the coming weeks. AFI Docs runs from June 13-17. For more information, click [here](#).

<http://realscreen.com/2018/05/04/afi-docs-slates-united-skates-personal-statement-to-bookend-fest/>

Inside Out announces 2018 lineup

The 28th edition of Toronto's LGBTQ film festival will screen new films by Desiree Akhavan, John Cameron Mitchell and Sook-Yin Lee

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

MAY 4, 2018

11:30 AM



*Desiree Akhavan's Sundance-winning drama **The Miseducation Of Cameron Post** is a special presentation at Inside Out 2018.*

The Inside Out film festival announced its 2018 lineup today, and it's packed: the 28th edition of the festival will screen 49 features and 84 shorts from a total of 27 countries, all dedicated to exploring and illuminating LGBTQ issues.

There's a strong selection of trans and non-binary content in this year's festival, which runs from May 24 to June 3.

Documentary programming includes Sophia Dros's **Genderbende**, about five young Dutch people who identify as non-binary or genderqueer and the way they negotiate daily life; T Cooper's **Man Made**, a look at four trans men training for the world's only all-trans bodybuilding competition; Kiko Goifman and Claudia Priscilla's **Bixa Travesty**, celebrating the Brazilian trans artist Quebrada, and PJ Raval's Hot Docs hit **Call Her Ganda**, recounting the attempt to prosecute an American serviceman for the murder of a trans woman in the Philippines.

A number of shorts continue the conversation, including Milena Salazar and Joella Cabalu's **Do I Have Boobs Now?**, about trans activist Courtney Demone's efforts to challenge Instagram's image restrictions and Mary Evangelista's **Fran This Summer**, about a teenager in transition.

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Trans issues also feature strongly in Luis De Filippis's Sundance winner **For Nonna Anna** and Chandler Levack's **We Forgot To Break Up**, which both premiered at TIFF last year.

Silas Howard's **A Kid Like Jake**, starring Claire Danes and Jim Parsons as the parents of a gender-fluid four-year-old, was announced as the opening night film last month, but now we know Inside Out 2018 will close with the international premiere of Brett Haley's **Hearts Beat Loud**, starring Nick Offerman and Kiersey Clemons as a father and daughter whose close relationship is fractured when they start a band together – and have an unexpected hit.

Canary, Christiaan Olwagen's musical drama about a young man coming of age in Apartheid-era South Africa, makes its world premiere as the festival's Centerpiece, while Amy Adrion's documentary **Half The Picture**, a documentary taking stock of female filmmakers in American cinema, will receive its Canadian premiere as this year's Women's Gala.

Screening in special presentation slots are Desiree Akhavan's **The Miseducation Of Cameron Post**, which won the grand jury prize at Sundance earlier this year and stars Chloë Grace Moretz as a queer teen sent to a “de-gaying” facility, and Yen Tan's **1985**, which casts Gotham's Corey Michael Smith as a closeted man trying to come out to his conservative family in the early years of the AIDS crisis.

Canadian programming includes the world premiere of Sook-Yin Lee's new feature **Octavio Is Dead**, starring Sarah Gadon as a woman trying to discover the father she never got the chance to meet – over the objections of her mother (Rosanna Arquette) – and the Canadian premiere of Colin Minihan's **What Keeps You Alive**, with Brittany Allen and Hannah Emily Anderson as a couple whose first wedding anniversary becomes a battle for survival.

Sarah Fodey's **The Fruit Machine** looks at the RCMP's efforts to weed out gay federal employees during the Cold War – on the grounds that their sexuality could make them a blackmail risk – and Laura Marie Wayne's **Love, Scott** – which just screened at Hot Docs – follows the filmmaker's friend Scott Jones as he recovers from a brutal assault by joining the fight against homophobic hate crimes.

The Icons program is packed with documentaries about, well, icons: **Antonio Lopez 1970: Sex, Fashion, & Disco** profiles the eponymous illustrator who helped shaped the images of Grace Jones and Jerry Hall, among others; **Every Act Of Life** looks at the career of American playwright Terrence McNally; **Larger Than Life: The Kevyn Aucoin Story** examines the

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legacy of a pivotal makeup artist; **Silvana** introduces us to a Swedish punk legend and **To A More Perfect Union: US V Windsor** concludes the story of Edith Windsor and Thea Spyer, whose relationship was the subject of the documentary *Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement*.

The Premieres program includes **Hurley**, a documentary about 70s racing star Hurley Haywood, whose life was far more complicated than his all-American image suggested; **Night Comes On**, a drama about a young woman released from juvenile detention on her 18th birthday directed by actor Jordana Spiro, and **Skate Kitchen**, a drama about a young woman drawn to the skateboarding cliques of New York City from Crystal Moselle, who made her name with the documentary *The Wolfpack*.

Films in the International Showcase include **Anchor And Hope**, starring Oona Chaplin and Natalia Tena as an English couple whose happy life is thrown by an unexpected pregnancy; **Evening Shadows**, Sridhar Rangayan's drama about a gay Mumbai man who visits his parents in South India to discover they've arranged a marriage for him to a childhood friend; **How To Talk To Girls At Parties**, a sci-fi comedy set in 1977 London from *Hedwig And The Angry Inch* director John Cameron Mitchell and starring Nicole Kidman and Elle Fanning, and **Mr. Gay Syria**, a documentary that considers Syria's refugee crisis through the eyes of its displaced LGBTQ citizens.

Inside Out runs from May 24 to June 3 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox. For full details and schedule, visit [the festival website](#).

Column: Coming soon: A Laquan McDonald documentary that makes the story even worse



Photos: Developments in the 2014 fatal shooting of Laquan McDonald by Chicago police Officer Jason Van Dyke.

Eric Zorn **Contact Reporter** Change of Subject

What's new in "The Blue Wall," a just-released feature-length documentary about the shooting death of Laquan McDonald?

It's a fair question. The story of the fallout after McDonald, 17, was gunned down by Chicago police Officer Jason Van Dyke on the Southwest Side in October 2014, is well known locally: The disturbing dash-cam video showing McDonald walking away from police as he was struck by 16 bullets, the evidence of a police cover-up, the first-degree murder charges filed against Van Dyke and now his pending trial.

And I assumed, going into an advance screening last month, that the film would be little more than a handy digest of this familiar story aimed mostly at a national audience with little knowledge of the details of the story that put Chicago's police practices under a microscope.

In fact, director Richard Rowley and producers Jacqueline Soohen and Jamie Kalven have fleshed out the story with fresh interviews and rare archival material that are going to make "The Blue Wall" the must-see film of 2018 in Chicago.

I'll start with the ending. In the final moments before the credits roll we hear a recording of police-radio chatter in the aftermath of the shooting.

"I need to get some info on the victim's condition ..." says a dispatcher.

Chicago Tribune – May 4, 2018 (2 of 4)

“Offender,” says an officer on the scene, correcting her.

“That’s what I meant,” says the dispatcher.

This exchange, not reported in mainstream media to my knowledge, neatly encapsulates the Police Department’s determination to immediately seize control of the narrative and justify the shooting before the facts were known.

That determination to quickly put McDonald in the role of offender is also seen earlier in the film when viewers meet, almost certainly for the first time, Alma Benitez, Jose Torres and Torres’ adult son Xavier — citizen witnesses to the shooting. They describe police taking them in immediately for lengthy questioning in which they say detectives badgered them to change their story to have McDonald lunging at Van Dyke instead of moving away.

Benitez says detectives told her that they had video evidence that she was lying about the number of gunshots she’d heard (the dash-cam images corroborated her account).

Of course we see that familiar dash-cam video. But we also see rare surveillance video taken minutes before the shooting showing McDonald, who was suspected of breaking into vehicles in a nearby trucking yard, walking down a sidewalk followed, calmly, by a police officer on foot.

The footage suggests that most of the officers involved that night felt they had the situation under control and did not see McDonald as an immediate threat. It was only Van Dyke, who moments later pulled up on the scene and began firing, who overreacted.

Co-producer Kalven is a veteran local journalist and human rights activist who wrote the first long story about this case in Slate after a law enforcement source leaked McDonald’s autopsy report to him. His involvement, both behind the scenes and as an interview subject, will allow critics to write off the film as propaganda.

But while “The Blue Wall” does advance the view that police and city officials, including Mayor Rahm Emanuel, attempted to spin and cover up a damning story, it also includes balancing interviews with former police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, former Cook County State’s

Chicago Tribune – May 4, 2018 (3 of 4)

Attorney Anita Alvarez, Van Dyke's attorney Daniel Herbert and former Fraternal Order of Police officials Dean Angelo and Pat Camden.

The filmmakers' efforts to interview Emanuel were unsuccessful.

One of the more memorable moments occurs when an interviewer challenges Camden about how the officers on the scene all gave statements that were consistent with Van Dyke's claims of self-defense but inconsistent with the plain video record. How is that possible, she asks, unless there is a code of silence in the department in which officers are willing to lie to protect one another?

"I've got to be honest with you now," says Camden, "I do not like the way we're going with this interview."

No wonder.

It's outrageous enough that one officer jumped from his car and emptied his gun at a suspect who was not advancing on or otherwise threatening him. But the systemic scandal is that a substantial network of authorities immediately shifted into concealment and denial mode, and that the truth would never have come out were it not for some dogged reporting and the emergence of the dash-cam video.

McCarthy, now running for mayor, offers a now-familiar excuse for Van Dyke that the officer faced "a dangerous situation" because McDonald was holding a 3-inch knife and "you could die" if someone with a knife suddenly turned and charged at you.

I'll leave it to the jury in Van Dyke's trial, not yet scheduled but maybe as soon as this summer, to rule on the legal strength of that claim.

But politically, my goodness, particularly after this movie comes to town, what a loser! Even if Van Dyke is acquitted, as I've predicted he will be, the stench of the cover-up that went well beyond him will linger on his defenders.

Chicago Tribune – May 4, 2018 (4 of 4)

“The Blue Wall” had its first public showing Tuesday at Toronto’s Hot Docs film festival, and its backers say they’re hoping to bring it to Chicago sometime around the opening of Van Dyke’s trial, whenever that turns out to be.

Watching the old story again will make you mad. Seeing new material will make you even madder.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/zorn/ct-perspec-zorn-laquan-mcdonald-jason-van-dyke-documentary-0506-20180504-story.html>

Welcome to TFCA Friday, a weekly round-up of film reviews and articles by TFCA critics.

May 4, 2018

OPENING THIS WEEK

Backstabbing for Beginners (dir. Per Fly)



"It's all very detailed, and it's all very dull, hampered even further by a weightless central performance from Divergent co-star Theo James, who proves utterly uninteresting as the fictionalized version of [memoirist Michael] Soussan" — Norm Wilner, NOW Magazine

Bad Samaritan (dir. Dean Devlin)



"Has exactly one clever shot and one great line, and they're about 90 minutes apart. Is it worth slogginq through the dull, uninspired movie in between, even for the biggest David Tennant fans? Nah" — Norm Wilner, NOW Magazine

"Genuinely scary... delivers quite a few jump-out-of-your-seat moments" — Gilbert Seah, Festival Reviews

Toronto Film Critics Association – May 4, 2018 (2 of 3)

“Arguably, only truly gifted actors can be this bad, and Tennant’s turn is absurd enough to be almost fun” — Liam Lacey, Original-Cin.ca

Tully (dir. Jason Reitman)



“Honestly, Young Adult was a masterwork compared to this” — Norm Wilner, NOW Magazine

“Cody’s third-act twist threatens to unravel Theron’s hard work; yet, somehow, the power of Tully remains firmly in Theron’s skilled and capable hands” — Barry Hertz, The Globe and Mail, including [an interview with Reitman](#)

“Could have been a crowd-pleaser with an insightful message to make the world a better place, but the film lacks the magic to make this happen” — Gilbert Seah, Festival Reviews

“[Cody’s] strongest screenplay since Juno, and Reitman handles it with a delicacy missing in his recent parenting-themed movies Labor Day and Men, Women & Children” — Chris Knight, The National Post

Hot Docs 2018



Toronto Film Critics Association – May 4, 2018 (3 of 3)

In The Globe and Mail, Barry Hertz interviews *The Trolley* director Stephen Low on filming in IMAX, which Liam Lacey says is “a poetic celebration of the history and future of the electric street car” over at Original-Cin.ca

POV Magazine’s Pat Mullen has reviews of *Grit* (“the great eco doc of Hot Docs 2018”), *This Mountain Life* (“a love letter to the outdoors”), and *The Reckoning: Hollywood’s Worst Kept Secret* (“calls out Hollywood’s complicity in the Weinstein affair and the enabling of other predators who have fallen in the seismic shift”), while Marc Glassman wishes Hot Docs a happy silver anniversary (25 years!) while capping the final weekend of the festival

Summer Movie Previews! (AKA: Summer is nearly here!)



First up: Peter Howell asks: Will 2018 be the best summer for movies? That’s the billion-dollar question

Next, Chris Knight: From Solo to Ocean’s Eight to Deadpool 2, yet another summer feast of sequels and remakes awaits

Finally, Barry Hertz tallies up the summer’s biggest tickets

A mother-daughter bond strengthens during a gruelling trek along the Coastal Mountains

CBC Radio · May 4



(Peg Leg Films)

Listen 31:21

Many mark a 60th birthday by celebrating with friends or treating themselves to a spa day. And many young people seek out ways to get away from their parents. Tania and Martina Halik of Invermere, British Columbia are different.

For more than a year, the mother and daughter plotted and planned a trip, then set out together to trek across some of the most rugged terrain in Canada.

They hiked and skied the Coastal Mountains, from Squamish, B.C. to Skagway, Alaska, and lived not only to tell the tale but to see their trip highlighted in a new documentary film, [This Mountain Life](#) It premiered this week in Toronto at the international documentary film festival, [HotDocs](#).

Martina says it was an easy decision to ask her mother to join her on this adventure: "I couldn't think of a better partner...I knew I could trust her."

Tania Halik says her escape from communist Czechoslovakia across the mountains of Switzerland helped to gird her for this trip.

"I think my life prepared me for this, much better than Martina because her life was so much easier," says Tania. "It was, in my opinion, much more about mental strength than physical strength."

CBC Radio (The Sunday Edition) – May 4, 2018 (2 of 3)

Both women had skills to help them face the challenges ahead. Tania is a paramedic who used to work as an avalanche forecaster. She still trains avalanche rescue dogs. Martina is an avalanche technician and, during the summer months, a professional photographer.



(Peg Leg Films)

In this conversation with guest host Laura Lynch, they share details of both the physical and mental challenges they faced during their journey, which lasted almost six months and covered 2,300 kilometres.

I feel like I understand my mom's background a little bit more. There's a lot of time to talk out there. And I think she understands me better as well. - *Martina Halik*

Tania prepared a mountain of dehydrated food for their journey, while Martina plotted the logistics for weekly food drops. Small boxes of provisions were tossed from the window of a friend's Cessna to predetermined locations, each one containing a Bluetooth beacon. The women found some within minutes, while others took several hours to locate.

They trekked during one of the harshest winters in recent memory, with -20C temperatures and high winds for weeks in a row. At the same time, they described the snow as their friend. They needed it to slide their equipment, and were shocked on occasion to find it wasn't there for them.



CBC Radio (The Sunday Edition) – May 4, 2018 (3 of 3)

Martina and Tania Halik enjoy the view after a hard day's hike. (Peg Leg Films)

"Some glaciers, like the Sawyer Glacier, had retreated over three-quarters of a mile in the preceding year, so I was pretty incredulous when we got to the top of a pass and looked down and there was ocean where I thought there'd still be kilometres of glacier. Google Earth imagery was about five years old in that location," says Martina. "It was difficult because we couldn't trust our maps or our satellite imagery. We'd be bushwhacking through alders, and the maps would be showing five more kilometres of glacier."

Mother and daughter agree that despite their occasional differences, the trip strengthened their bond.

"We became such a flawless team out there," says Martina. "I feel like I understand my mom's background a little bit more. There's a lot of time to talk out there. And I think she understands me better as well."

"I would do another trip like that with her in a heartbeat."

Tania readily agreed.

Take a look at the photo gallery below for pictures of their adventure. Listen to the full interview at the top of the page.

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition/the-sunday-edition-may-6-2018-1.4648293/a-mother-daughter-bond-strengthens-during-a-gruelling-trek-along-the-coastal-mountains-1.4648312>

‘Time for Ilhan’ Holds Top Spot in Hot Docs Audience Award Race

Posted on May 4th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Time for Ilhan

By Pat Mullen

Audiences love *Ilhan*! Norah Shapiro's political portrait about the rising star holds the top spot for the Hot Docs Audience Award going into the last weekend of the festival. Canadian frontrunner *Transformer* moved up to the overall runner-up spot while maintaining its lead for the Rogers Audience Award for Canadian Feature with Laura Bari's *Primas* moving up in the rankings.

Mr. Rogers doc *Won't You Be My Neighbour?* holds steady at #3. *Ilhan*, *Primas*, and *Neighbour* have at least one screening each remaining, while *Transformer* will have to keep its lead based on its Thursday final.

The Top 20 for the Audience Award as of May 4 are:

1. Time for Ilhan
2. Transformer
3. Won't You Be My Neighbor?
4. On Her Shoulders
5. Primas
6. The Accountant of Auschwitz
7. Bathtubs over Broadway
8. Pick of the Litter

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – May 4, 2018 (2 of 2)

9. The Game Changers
10. The Oslo Diaries
11. The Silver Branch
12. The Silence of Others
13. Letter from Masanjia
14. Prince's Tale
15. Exit Music
16. Matangi / Maya / M.I.A.
17. Warrior Women
18. Believer
19. Don't Be Nice
20. Laila at the Bridge

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

CP24 – May 5, 2018

Pick of the Litter screens at Hot Docs



<https://www.cp24.com/video?clipId=1387947>

Hot Docs 2018: A Little Wisdom, Transformer among award winners

The documentary festival hands out 13 prizes including best Canadian feature

BY **NORMAN WILNER**

MAY 5, 2018

11:18 AM



Michael Del Monte's Transformer won the emerging Canadian filmmaker award at Hot Docs 2018.

Hot Docs is still rolling this weekend, but the documentary festival announced most of its awards Friday night, naming winners in 13 categories and distributing \$85,000 in cash and prizes to some very happy filmmakers.

Yuqi Kang's **A Little Wisdom** – about an orphan monk growing up at a Tibetan monastery – was named best Canadian feature documentary, and took a \$10,000 prize; the film's last screening is today (Saturday May 5) at 1 pm at the Revue Cinema.

The DGC special jury prize for Canadian feature documentary went to Christy Garland's **What Walaa Wants**, about a young woman determined to join the predominantly male Palestinian Security Forces.

Michael Del Monte, director of **Transformer**, won the emerging Canadian filmmaker award, which comes with a \$3,000 cash prize; Del Monte's film follows trans bodybuilder Janae Marie Kroczaleski as she negotiates her personal and professional transition in the hyper-masculine environment of power building.

Hind Bensari's **We Could Be Heroes** – a profile of disillusioned Paralympic gold medalist Azzedine Nouiri – was named best international feature documentary, which comes with a

NOW Magazine – May 5, 2018 (2 of 3)

\$10,000 prize; it has its final screening tomorrow (Sunday May 6) at 8:45 pm at the Aga Khan Museum.

The special jury prize for international feature documentary was a tie, shared by Shameela Seedat's **Whispering Truth To Power** and Corrado Punzi's **Wind Of Swabia**; the \$5,000 cash prize will be split between the two films. Whispering Truth To Power, about the efforts of South Africa's public protector Thuli Madonsela to hold president Jacob Zuma accountable for illegal activities, will have its final screening tonight at 6:45 pm at the TIFF Bell Lightbox; Wind Of Swabia, a look at an Italian port city surrounded by corporate polluters, has one more show tomorrow at 10 am at the Scotiabank Theatre.

Siblings Elan and Jonathan Bogarin won the emerging international filmmaker award for **306 Hollywood**, their quirky look at the physical legacy of their grandmother Annette Ontell; that prize comes with a \$3,000 cash prize. The film's final screening is this afternoon at 3:30 pm at the Scotiabank Theatre. (The jury also gave an honourable mention to **The Proposal** director Jill Magid.)

Enrico Maist's **The Call**, a look at Italy's criminal justice system, won the \$3,000 best mid-length documentary award, while Christian Einshøj's **Haunted** – a stylized examination of empty-nest syndrome – was named best international short documentary. That award also carries a \$3,000 cash prize; the jury gave an honourable mention to Floyd Russ's **Zion**.

Jamie Miller's **Prince's Tale**, about performer Prince Amponsah, won the \$3,000 best Canadian short documentary prize; its final screening is tomorrow at 2:45 pm at the TIFF Bell Lightbox. (The jury gave an honourable mention to Christian Borys and Marta Iwanek's **Vika**.)

Previously announced awards presented at the ceremony include the Lindalee Tracey award for emerging Canadian filmmakers "with a passionate point of view, a strong sense of social justice and a sense of humour", given this year to Fazila Amiri and Tim Tracey; both Amiri and Tracey received \$5,000 cash prizes, \$5,000 in post-production services from Technicolor and the traditional Andrew Kuntz glass sculpture.

The Hot Docs outstanding achievement award was presented to American documentary legend Barbara Kopple, director of Harlan County U.S.A., American Dream and Dixie Chicks: Shut Up And Sing, among many others, and the Don Haig award, presented to Montreal producer Ina

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Fichman – who chose Fanny Drew and Sarah Mannering of Colonelle Films to receive this year's \$5,000 Don Haig Pay It Forward prize.

Finally, the \$5,000 Scotiabank Docs For Schools student choice award went to **On Her Shoulders**, Alexandria Bombach's empathetic profile of United Nations goodwill ambassador Nadia Murad Basee Taha.

But that's not the only audience award at Hot Docs; the \$50,000 Rogers audience award for best Canadian documentary will be announced tomorrow night at 7 pm at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, before a free screening of the winning film. UPDATE: Transformer **won that too!**

The other audience awards, and the top 20 audience picks of the 2018 festival, will be announced on Monday. Stay tuned.

‘A Little Wisdom’ Leads Hot Docs Award Winners

Posted on May 5th, 2018 • 0 Comments



A Little Wisdom

By Pat Mullen

Yuqi Kang's *A Little Wisdom* led the Hot Docs award winners announced last night. *A Little Wisdom* won the prize for Best Canadian Feature Documentary. The film is a visually sumptuous portrait of a young boy in Nepal as he begins his journey to become a monk. The jury called *A Little Wisdom* "outstandingly crafted" and remarked, "This absorbing cinematic film captures the distinct and moving inner rhythms of a Tibetan monastery, welcoming us into a world that we never thought a mischievous child could reveal." *A Little Wisdom* screens again today at the Revue Cinema at 1:00 PM.

The Director's Guild of Canada Special Jury Prize went to director Christy Garland for her feature *What Walaa Wants*. The doc is a powerful tale of a young girl beating the odds to pursue her dream job in the Palestinian Security Forces. The jury for praised Garland for "displaying an extraordinary bond between filmmaker and subject which then carries over to the audience."

Director Michael Del Monte received the Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award for *Transformer*. The film offers a portrait of transgender bodybuilder Janae Croc as she navigates her desire to look and feel like her true feminine self while continuing the strength training that empowers her. *Transformer* has maintained a healthy lead as the favourite Canadian film in the Audience Award race for the duration of the festival.

The Lindalee Tracey Award went to Fazila Amiri and Tim Tracey. The award honours the late filmmaker by supporting emerging filmmakers with a passion for documentary and socially conscious storytelling.

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Jamie Miller's *Prince's Tale* scooped the prize for Best Canadian Short Documentary with its striking portrait of a burn survivor who channels his pain into art. The jury called *Prince's Tale* "the kind of documentary we don't see enough of—an honest portrait in which the subject has agency to choose where his story begins and where it doesn't end." The film briefly enjoyed a #1 spot in the overall Audience Award rankings at the midpoint of the festival when it dethroned Mr. Rogers doc *Won't You Be My Neighbour?* and debuted at #1. The jury gave an honourable mention to Christian Borys and Marta Iwanek's short *Vika*.

On the international front, Danish director Christian Einshøj won the Best International Short Doc award for *Haunted*. The film explores a ghost story that haunts the filmmaker's childhood home.

Under recent rule changes from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, *Prince's Tale* and *Haunted* now qualify for the Oscar for Best Documentary, Short Subject without having to complete the traditional (and costly) theatrical run required for eligibility.

The Best International Feature Documentary Award went to *We Could Be Heroes* directed by Hind Bensari. The film, a co-production between Denmark, Tunisia, Morocco, and Qatar, offers a portrait of Moroccan Paralympic gold medalist Azzedine Nouiri who is denied the support and glory his country promised when he returns home. The Special Jury Prize for International Feature Documentary offered a tie between Shameela Seedat's *Whispering Truth to Power* and Corrado Punzi's *Wind of Swabia*, while the Emerging International Filmmaker Award went to Elan Bogarín and Jonathan Bogarín for *306 Hollywood*. Jill Magid received an honourable mention for her wild and brilliant *The Proposal*. The prize for Best Mid-Length Documentary went to the Italian film *The Call* by Enrico Maisto.

Previously announced career honours went to Barbara Kopple with the Outstanding Achievement Award, John Walker with the Focus On award, Ina Fichman with the Don Haig Award, and Cara Mertes with the Doc Mogul Award.

The awards presentation gave out over \$85,000 to the distinguished filmmakers. Audience Award winners will be announced on Sunday and Monday.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

<http://povmagazine.com/blog/view/a-little-wisdom-leads-hot-docs-award-winners>

'Ilhan' Plummets as Canadian Titles Go Dark in Hot Docs Race

Posted on May 5th, 2018 • 0 Comments



Transformer

By Pat Mullen

The game keeps changing! After holding the top spot for two days in a row, *Time for Ilhan* plummeted off the Audience Award chart entirely following its final Hot Docs screening. The lead has now been taken by either *Transformer*, *The Accountant of Auschwitz*, or *Primas*. *Transformer* held the runner-up spot yesterday with *Primas* at #5 and *Accountant* at #6. *Transformer* completed its run earlier in the week, so it couldn't have dropped below *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, which has its final screening tomorrow. Both *Primas* and *Accountant* had their final screenings yesterday.

The Canadian titles eligible for the Rogers Canadian Audience Award have been masked in an effort to keep the race a surprise. The winner will be revealed tomorrow ahead of a free encore screening.

The Top 20 in the Audience Award race are:

1. Rogers Audience Award Contender
2. Rogers Audience Award Contender
3. Won't You Be My Neighbor?
4. On Her Shoulders
5. Bathtubs over Broadway
6. Pick of the Litter
7. The Game Changers
8. Rogers Audience Award Contender

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- 9. The Silver Branch
- 10. United Skates
- 11. Rogers Audience Award Contender
- 12. Rogers Audience Award Contender
- 13. The Silence of Others
- 14. Prince's Tale
- 15. Rogers Audience Award Contender
- 16. Exit Music
- 17. Rogers Audience Award Contender
- 18. MATANGI / MAYA / M.I.A.
- 19. Warrior Women
- 20. Rogers Audience Award Contender

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

“It’s about the Barriers to Justice that Exist when you are Poor and Up Against a Foreign Superpower”: PJ Raval on *Call Her Ganda*



Call Her Ganda

by [Lauren Wissot](#)

in [Directors, Interviews](#)

on May 5, 2018

[Call Her Ganda](#), [Documentary](#), [Hot Docs 2018](#), [pj raval](#), [Tribeca Film Festival 2018](#)

Fresh off its Tribeca world premiere, and currently wrapping up at Hot Docs (till Sunday, May 6th), *Call Her Ganda*, an alumnus of Spotlight on Documentaries at IFP Week, is the latest feature from [25 New Faces of Independent Film](#) alum PJ Raval. The thought-provoking doc follows the heartbreaking and utterly thorny story of Jennifer Laude, much beloved by a doting mother (who called her by her nickname “Ganda,” which means “Beauty”), sisters, and her German fiancé. After a night out with girlfriends back in 2014, the 26-year-old ended up being murdered by US marine Scott Pemberton, who left her naked body in a hotel room bathroom, her head in the toilet. That Jennifer had the bad luck of being a member of an oft-ostracized community — in this case trans sex workers — in a country (the Philippines) that allows for the US military to be exempt from its local laws, is what makes her tragic death also so very complicated.

What makes *Call Her Ganda* so powerful is that Raval smartly widens the lens to tell Jennifer’s tale through the afterlife of her death, an event that brought together three real-life wonder women — a grieving mother who refuses to let her daughter be shamed, a tenacious, trans American journalist with roots in the Philippines, and a cisgender female lawyer determined to put a check on US imperialism.

Filmmaker caught up with Raval during Hot Docs to discuss what happens when human rights activism collides with American impunity in a country now run by a brutal, anti-Western, strongman.

Filmmaker Magazine – May 5, 2018 (2 of 3)

Filmmaker: My favorite VR piece last year was Gina Kim's breathtaking *Bloodless*, which deals with the gruesome murder of a (cisgender) prostitute — a crime for which US Forces in Korea refused to extradite the suspected soldier. That event similarly provoked mass protests by Koreans against US militarism and the 96 "camp towns" that exist in a legal no-man's land on Korean soil. That killing happened back in 1992, though, and to this day justice has not been achieved. Do you know if activists in these countries where the US military has immunity from local laws are currently banding together for worldwide change?

Raval: I don't know, but they should! In the case of Jennifer Laude, Pemberton was only brought to trial through the combined efforts of different activist and human rights groups. Trans rights activists, LGBT activists, women's rights groups, and anti-imperialist groups brought attention to the crime and demanded that the Philippine government take action. But I'm not sure each group could have been as effective working individually. So this solidarity amongst communities was a huge first step, and now perhaps this can expand into other regions to create a larger and more unified network. But easier said than done, right? The Visiting Forces Agreement is still very much in effect in the Philippines, so I can see how hard it'd be for these activists to start thinking beyond their own nation when there's so much work needed to be done right at home. But perhaps a unified global effort could be equally effective.

Filmmaker: I also wonder if, given today's climate — MeToo, more trans visibility, more sex worker activism — we're now at a turning point. Is this female-led movement happening in the Philippines as well, or just in Western nations?

Raval: It's not a coincidence the subjects of *Call Her Ganda* are all women and trans women. In the Philippines, at the forefront of this movement were those who have been constantly subjected to violence and abuse due to increased militarization — not only women, queer women, trans women, and women-identified individuals, but also mothers, daughters, and sisters. But the Philippines has always had strong female leaders — there was a woman president long before the US had even had a woman presidential nominee. The Philippines also has one of the first openly trans congress members. So in a lot of ways the Philippines is much more gender-inclusive and progressive than "the West."

Filmmaker: One of the thornier aspects of your doc is the fact that the nationalist policies of a strongman like Duterte may actually lead to much-needed correctives and accountability. Duterte may be a cold-blooded killer himself, but he also met with Jennifer's mother, offered her financial support, and (according to him) is even trying to scrap the Visiting Forces Agreement that allows for US soldiers to act with impunity. How do Filipinos reconcile the contradictions of a president who simultaneously murders the marginalized and comes to their rescue?

Raval: Well, up until now the Visiting Forces Agreement is still very much in effect despite the public statements made by Duterte, and I don't think there's anything in the works to dismantle or abrogate the agreement. So one has to question if the current administration will change anything at all. Also, as trans activist Naomi Fontanos has so eloquently stated in some of our post-screening Q&As, there's a difference between advocating for sovereignty versus expressing anti-US sentiments. Even though Duterte has made anti-US statements, he's also made pro-China and pro-Russia sentiments as well. So one also has to wonder if he's

Filmmaker Magazine – May 5, 2018 (3 of 3)

advocating for the Philippines to be dependent on new alliances with other foreign superpowers and not the US versus advocating for an actual independent sovereign nation. The two are not the same.

Filmmaker: It struck me that neither the perpetrator in this heinous crime, nor his family, nor anyone from our military forces was interviewed for your film. Did you reach out to anyone on that side? If so, what was the reaction?

Raval: It's nearly impossible to interview Pemberton since the trial is technically not settled. We had a military advisor who got us in direct communication with Pemberton's chain of command, and this high-ranking military official told us even they could not grant access since this case had become a clear issue of diplomacy. And unless they received word from the President of the US...

But at the same time, for me Pemberton *is not* the story. The story is these willful women and their experience taking on the US to fight for justice over the death of Jennifer Laude. It's not about whether or not Pemberton is guilty, it's about the barriers to justice that exist when you are poor and you're up against a foreign superpower.

Making the film about Pemberton and the US would be a disservice to the subjects and what's at stake. Effects of colonialism and imperialism run deep, and in this case I chose to make the film about the colonized and not the colonizer. Some people have a hard time understanding that point of view and want a more easily digestible "true crime story." But as Virgie Suarez, the attorney representing the Laude family, says, "This is not a simple case of murder." In order to understand what happened to Jennifer that night one has to look into the history between a colonizer and the former colony or neo-colony. This is not about a crime or a trial. It is about a long, deep-running imperialist relationship, and each twist and turn is informed by that unequal relationship.

<https://filmmakermagazine.com/105287-its-about-the-barriers-to-justice-that-exist-when-you-are-poor-and-up-against-a-foreign-fuperpower-pj-raval-on-call-her-ganda/>

Hot Docs Film Review: ‘McQueen’

The brilliant, tortured fashion designer Alexander McQueen gets a documentary portrait worthy of his strange, sensual artistry.

By GUY LODGE



CREDIT: COURTESY OF BLEECKER STREET

Director:

Ian Bonhôte, Peter Ettedgui

Release Date:

Jul 20, 2018

1 hour 50 minutes

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In their supremely elegant and engrossing documentary “McQueen,” Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui appropriate the skull as a sleek, flexibly recurring cinematic image, restyling it from chapter to chapter as a marker of both McQueen’s evolving aesthetic and his deteriorating state of mind. It’s a device that could be gauche, but is executed with such panache and emotional integrity that it finds a roundabout way toward grace — not unlike their subject’s own stunning catwalk creations, which challenged wearers and observers alike with broken rules of form and function. Itself crafted with great artistry and ingenuity, “McQueen” works both as a spectacular visual album of his work and an achingly moving account of the incomplete life behind it. That’s a rare balance to strike in the fashion-doc subgenre, and one that should yield audience interest beyond the rag-trade niche — as did the blockbuster museum retrospective of his work, aptly named “Savage Beauty,” on both sides of the Atlantic some years back.

The young Lee McQueen, for his part, never fit snugly into the fashionista set. A chubby, working-class lad from London’s underprivileged Stratford region, he was later persuaded by his adoring industry mentor Isabella Blow to professionally assume Alexander, his middle name, “because it sounded posher.” His earliest years in the industry saw him treated as an endearing novelty: As a teen, he began knocking on Savile Row doors in search of an apprenticeship,

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wowing amused couturiers with his cutting and tailoring skills, and eventually earning a place at the venerable Central St. Martin's art college. McQueen swiftly channelled his misfit status into his clothes, drawing upon unlikely, viscerally unsavory influences in his bluntly named early collections, 1992's "Jack the Ripper Stalks His Victims" and 1995's "Highland Rape," and arousing industry and media controversy in the process.

Yet the film's wealth of archive catwalk footage show McQueen's work, although strongly idiomatic of the liberal, gung-ho hedonism that dominated British culture in the 1990s, has aged rather well: not just in its visual expansion of accepted styles and silhouettes, but in its abrasive, richly debatable engagement with the industry's abuse and sexualization of women. "Highland Rape," in which models were sent down a bramble-strewn runway in tattered ensembles and bruised makeup, was decried as misogynistic, and likely would be today, though McQueen insisted it was questioning rather than complicit.

The directors fluidly use such discussions as cues to examine McQueen's own inner demons, the frank personal testimony of family, friends and colleagues adding vital context to the dazzling theater of the macabre that was his oeuvre. "McQueen" presents his designs as inextricable from his psychology, the mark of an artist rather than a businessman, even as his fashion brand grew beyond his expectations. He was as surprised as anyone else when old-school Parisian fashion house Givenchy invited him to be their chief designer in 1996. Though working under another imprint gave him some experience in separating his darkest impulses from commerce, the need to express himself more wildly in his own line necessitated an unsustainable, drug-fueled work rate that did an already fragile psyche few favors.

"McQueen's" final sections — titled "tapes" in the film, and themed around his collections — play poignantly as the comedown after the trip, its talking heads often on the brink of tears themselves as they reflect on a grief-riven personal collapse that McQueen partially masked through his consistently impeccable work. (Even viewers unmoved by fashion may feel a lump in the throat in an exquisite sequence on McQueen's ravishing 2007 "La Dame Bleue" show, a visual elegy completed in the wake of Blow's death from cancer.) If "McQueen" isn't quite comprehensive as biography — among other blank spaces, there's no mention of the designer's late, unofficial husband George Forsyth, though other former partners are interviewed — it exhibits his art to far more emotionally evocative effect than a Wikipedia-like trawl through the facts ever could.

Finally, Bonhôte and Ettegui (a writer on the similarly unusual, sinuous bio-doc "Listen to Me Marlon") have succeeded most pleasingly in fashioning McQueen as an inherently cinematic subject, honoring his legacy with their own formal inventions and extravagances — chief among them a thrillingly sumptuous, high-drama score by Michael Nyman (himself a former McQueen collaborator) and a series of intricate interstitial animations centered on that all-important skull, infesting it with tangled foliage or draping it in gold, dictated by the tenor of his life and work over the years. A script for a narrative McQueen biopic has been doing the rounds for a few years: If it's to top this doc as either portrait or tribute, it has its work finely cut out for it.

Hot Docs Film Review: 'McQueen'

Reviewed at Hot Docs Film Festival (Special Presentations), April 28, 2018. (Also in Tribeca Film Festival — Spotlight Documentary.) Running time: 110 MIN.

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PRODUCTION: (U.K.) A Bleecker Street (in U.S.)/Lionsgate (in U.K.) release of a Misfits Entertainment, Salon Pictures production in association with Creativity Capital, Embankment Films, The Electric Shadow Company, Time Based Arts, Moving Pictures Media. (International sales: Embankment Films, London.) Producers: Ian Bonhôte, Andee Ryder, Nick Taussig, Paul Van Carter. Executive producers: Tim Haslam, Hugo Grumbar, John Jenkins, Jay Taylor, Patrick Fischer, Peter Ettedgui, David Gilbery, Kinvara Balfour, Isabella Marchese Ragona, Ian Burg, Richard Kondal. Co-producers: Sofia Ismail Martin, Pete Smyth.

CREW: Director: Ian Bonhôte. Co-director, writer: Peter Ettedgui. Camera (color): Will Pugh. Editor: Cinzia Baldessari. Music: Michael Nyman.

Hot Docs Film Review: 'McQueen'



Guy Lodge
Variety May 5, 2018



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Hot Docs Film Review: ‘Exit Music’

Cameron Mullenneaux's toughly moving study of a cystic fibrosis patient's final months thoughtfully avoids the mawkish pitfalls of its subject.

By **GUY LODGE**



CREDIT: COURTESY OF HOT DOCS

Director:

Cameron Mullenneaux

With:

Ethan Rice, Ed Rice, Edith Rice, Devlin Rice, Ursula McVeigh.

The original title for “Exit Music,” changed at the eleventh hour ahead of its world premiere in Hot Docs, was “How Do You Feel About Dying,” and you can see why the switch was made: “Dying” is not, as a rule, a word that packs ‘em into the aisles. Yet that initial question, which can be banal or bluntly confrontational depending on the tone in which it is asked, encapsulates the blend of frankness and delicacy that distinguishes Cameron Mullenneaux’s wrenching documentary study of a young cystic fibrosis patient’s final months.

28-year-old Ethan Rice drily answers it himself in the film’s opening minutes: “I feel sad,” he says with ironic languor, poking fun at the one-dimensional solemnity with which stories like his are usually told. The sadness goes without saying, but he feels much else besides: anger, exhaustion and impatience, with bursts of amusement and creative inspiration in between. “Exit Music” covers the spectrum with grace, good humor and no emotional filter: It’s an unabashed tear-jerker that earns its saltwater through candor rather than undue manipulation. An audience favorite at Hot Docs, it should travel the docfest circuit extensively; distribution, particularly through streaming channels, should follow in due course.

A bright, funny, inventive young man who has never been able to move out of his family home in upstate New York, Ethan has known most of his life that he’s going to die sooner rather than later, as the incurable genetic illness with which he was born gradually collapses his respiratory system. If living under that shadow has made him accepting of his fate, it’s also caused him frustration as he’s continued to outlive doctors’ prognoses — which once forecast death in

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infancy — through the years. Now in his late twenties, in constant pain and with his inability to live independently more pointed in adulthood, is he fighting to live or waiting to die? Ethan distracts himself from such brooding concerns with short-term art projects: He's a composer and a deft stop-motion animator, and his own witty short films punctuate the documentary as sporadic, vibrant releases from a claustrophobic reality — just as they function in their creator's own life.

Ethan is blessed with a palliative doctor who understands his existential quandary: "People are living with life-threatening illnesses, but when are they dying?" she asks matter-of-factly. It's both unsurprising and wholly understandable that his doting parents and full-time carers, Ed and Edith, aren't able to take quite such a philosophical view of the situation. The closer their son comes to dictating the time and terms of his death, the harder it grows for them to accept its inevitability.

In particular, the struggle for Ed, a PTSD-afflicted Vietnam veteran with an inordinate history of family tragedy, to make peace with yet another unhappy ending becomes a key arc of "Exit Music," as the film tenderly traces a tangle of familial micro-conflicts born entirely out of love. Shooting discreetly, often on grainy video that compounds the sense of off-the-cuff closeness, Mullenneaux observes the family at such close quarters that it's occasionally hard to imagine a camera being in the room at all. Some footage, meanwhile, is shot by Ed, and the intensified intimacy of this material is felt.

That "Exit Music," edited with unfussy, time-tracking economy by Nels Bangerter ("Cameraperson") and Amy Foote ("The Work"), avoids feeling uncomfortable or exploitative is testament to the evident rapport between the director and her subject, who embraces the film as a chance to leave a larger mark on the world, and to control the shortened narrative of his life — right down to the music and montage choices he requests to mark the end. The film's closing sequences are every bit as devastating as expected, yet "Exit Music" shoots for some bittersweet hope amid the sadness: that accepting death needn't always be an act of defeat.

Hot Docs Film Review: 'Exit Music'

Reviewed at Hot Docs Film Festival (International Spectrum), April 27, 2018. Running time: 72 MIN. (Original title: "How Do You Feel About Dying")

PRODUCTION: A Pony Express Films production in association with ITVS. (International sales: Pony Express Films, San Francisco.) Producers: Cameron Mullenneaux, Linda Davis Garkow. Executive producer: Sally Jo Fifer.

CREW: Director, camera (color): Cameron Mullenneaux. Editors: Nels Bangerter, Amy Foote. Music: Ethan Rice.

WITH: Ethan Rice, Ed Rice, Edith Rice, Devlin Rice, Ursula McVeigh.

<https://variety.com/2018/film/reviews/exit-music-review-1202800698/>

Canadian Films Lead Audience Award Race on Last Day of Hot Docs

Posted on May 6th, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



Primas

By Pat Mullen

Two mystery Canadian films continue to lead the Hot Docs Audience Award race. The films, whose titles are withheld to provide an element of surprise leading up to tonight's encore screening of the Canadian winner, lead the overall field heading into the last day of the festival. The films, which are presumably *Transformer* and one of *Primas* or *The Accountant of Auschwitz* based on prior standings and screening dates, hold over Morgan Neville's crowd-pleasing Mr. Rogers doc *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*. The three top Canuck contenders have completed their runs while *Neighbor* has its final show this afternoon at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema.

Also screening today and moving up in the pack is the doggone adorable puppy doc *Pick of the Litter*. The film follows five dogs as they train to become guide dogs for the blind. Lou Psihoyos also moved up in the rankings with *The Game Changers*. He previously won Hot Docs with audience favourite *The Cove*.

The overall winner will be announced on Monday following the completion of the festival. The Canadian winner will be unveiled tonight at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema at 7:00 PM with an encore screening.

The Top 20 docs in the hunt for the Audience Award are:

1. Rogers Audience Award Contender
2. Rogers Audience Award Contender
3. *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*
4. *The Game Changers*

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5. Pick of the Litter
6. On Her Shoulders
7. Bathtubs over Broadway
8. Rogers Audience Award Contender
9. The Silver Branch
10. The Silence of Others
11. United Skates
12. Rogers Audience Award Contender
13. Rogers Audience Award Contender
14. Prince's Tale
15. Rogers Audience Award Contender
16. Rogers Audience Award Contender
17. Mr. SOUL!
18. Rogers Audience Award Contender
19. Warrior Women
20. Believer

The POV Interview: Ina Fichman on a Career in Documentary

Hot Docs' worthy recipient of the 2018 Don Haig Award

By [Marc Glassman](#) • Published May 6th, 2018 [0 Comments](#)



Laila at the Bridge, one of Ina Fichman's two films at Hot Docs this year.

The deserved honouree at Hot Docs of this year's Don Haig Award for a career as an independent producer, Ina Fichman, is feisty, sincere and determined. A genuine dynamo, she works tirelessly for her filmmakers and films. The Montreal native has all the qualities you'd want in a producer: she knows how to finance and distribute work, has an instinct for picking solid projects and can zero in on what can improve a film. *POV* had the opportunity to speak with Fichman about her career during Hot Docs.—Marc Glassman



Producer Ina Fichman

POV: Marc Glassman

Ina: Ina Fichman

POV: Congratulations on all the films you've produced, Ina, and the Don Haig Award.

Ina: Thank you. I'm quite honoured.

POV: Why don't we start off by talking about your current work, the films that are at Hot Docs? I'd like to begin with *Laila at the Bridge*, a personal view of an amazing woman who is saving drug addicts in Kabul. Can you tell me about how it got financed?

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Ina: I've spent a lot of time in Los Angeles over the last few years, because there's a wonderful documentary community there, and some resources for films. A good friend of mine introduced me to Gulistan and Elizabeth Mirzaei. They had lived in Afghanistan for eight years—he's Afghan; she's American—and they spent three years shooting footage with Laila and the addicts. They had been selected to go to Deal Maker at Hot Docs. They had shot the footage; they had done a Kickstarter campaign in the early days and had raised some money so that they could shoot; but they had never really raised enough money to finish shooting the film and to edit and post-produce it. So, I looked at the trailer, and met them at their apartment in Los Angeles. The trailer needed some work but it seemed like there was something potentially interesting in the footage.

I sat with Elizabeth for a few hours, and said, "Show me what else you have here." I started to ask her questions while she showed me footage, and I went, "Holy moley"—talk about a trailer not serving a film. I said, listen, we're going to go to Deal Maker together, but we have to re-cut the trailer.

And so I got involved. We sat, we recut the trailer, we came to Hot Docs and we started having conversations with potential buyers. Marc, you know how long it takes to make a deal with anybody, but in the end, I brought on board four broadcasters and got more money from funds. We had a Canadian editor, a Canadian composer, and Canadian voices for the French-Canadian version. We did all of our post in Canada as well.

It had its world premiere at CPH:DOX, where we won the F:ACT Award, which is essentially for best creative-journalistic feature doc.

POV: You must have got right away that Laila is one of those great documentary subjects—she's so charismatic.

Ina: Absolutely. But the challenge of a film like this is that, yes, she's charismatic, but she's a badass. So, a lot of the editing process was about how to have a balanced character—someone who's tough and can be a pain in the ass, but is also very compassionate and can't show too much of her vulnerable side, because she's dealing with addicts. It's not about being compassionate all the time; you have to be tough.

POV: Well, it works very well, and kudos for making this one happen. Your other film at Hot Docs, *The Oslo Diaries*, tells the story of the attempt in the early '90s, which started with secret talks in Norway, to create peace in the Middle East. At one point, Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat signed a treaty with President Bill Clinton, but then it all came apart. How did you become involved with *The Oslo Diaries*?



Ina: I saw *Censored Voices*, the previous film made by Mor Loushy and Daniel Sivan at Sundance, and loved the film. I've known their Israeli producer Hilla Medalia for many years as well. My film, *The Wanted 18*, ends with the Oslo Accords. I've made many films from the Middle East, and people often refer to these Oslo Accords, and I never really quite understood what happened. So, when I heard the pitch for *The Oslo Diaries*, I thought, this is a film that must get made: I mean, what happened? What was going on behind those closed doors? Who was committed to making the peace process work, and why didn't it work? And I think that, ultimately, the film accomplishes not just telling that story, but engaging an audience in the emotional rollercoaster of trying to make this happen. *The Oslo Diaries* is, on the one hand, hopeful, because you go, "Wow, they almost got there," but it's also depressing, especially in light of what's going on today.

POV: Absolutely. It's a real tragedy. So, tell me about when you got involved—was it early days?

Ina: Oh, it was very early days. They hadn't even started shooting yet. I think it was either at the Israeli co-production market, or—I really don't remember where—where we decided to work on the film, and Jean Pelletier from Radio-Canada, who has supported all of the films I've done in the Middle East — *The Wanted 18*, *Vita Activa: the Spirit of Hannah Arendt*, a film we did about the Dead Sea — immediately said he wanted to get involved, which was wonderful, and then I built my finance plan in Canada from there. I've been very lucky that SODEC has been a big, big supporter of almost every film I've done in that region, just because there aren't that many Quebec producers who are there. I make a diversity of films; it's not like I just work with the same filmmaker every time. I'm working with many different directors in Israel and the

Palestinian territories. So, they've been very supportive. I built my finance plan from there: I got SODEC, I got Rogers—Robin Mirsky has been a tremendous supporter of these films—plus the usual tax credits, and then Bruce Cowley at the CBC heard the pitch I think at IDFA, and he came on board as well, for a small amount.

POV: When you're talking about a film like *The Oslo Diaries*, what kind of budget level did you want to get to?

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Ina: I think our whole budget in the end was about \$1.2 million. There was a large license fee on the Israeli side from Arte in Germany.

POV: That helps a lot. Whereas with *Laila* I would assume it was quite a bit less—would that be true?

Ina: Yes, absolutely. But it's very hard when you talk about budgets. A lot of *Laila* had been shot on their own dime. With *Oslo*, we needed a budget for all the archives and re-enactments in the film. We couldn't have done it any other way. With *Laila*, I don't even want to talk about the budget level, simply because we needed to have enough time to edit it, do good post-production, have a great composer, and do some additional shooting.

POV: It's also really hard, I would imagine, to judge what three years of two people's lives are worth. It's a crazy amount—it's imponderable.



Laila at the Bridge directors Elissa Sylvia Mirzaei and Gulistan Mirzaei.

Ina: Exactly. Elizabeth and Gulistan's attitude was like the American way of thinking about documentaries, which is you go and shoot at least a good chunk of it, and then you raise money. It is not how we do things in Canada. In our system, we're blessed in many ways, having the resources that we have. But, it would be wonderful if we could also encourage a little risk-taking, in terms of broadcasters saying, "Here's some money, go and shoot for three weeks, and then come back and show us what you've got." Not just, "Write a 30-page treatment."

POV: Which in some ways seems completely absurd. Can you imagine writing a script for *Laila*? It would be impossible.

Ina: Impossible. And yes, we had to write treatment after treatment to submit to Tribeca or to other places, but it was based on an in depth knowledge of the story and characters. It was a little bit different than the exercise of writing a documentary script, and then being told, "Oh wow, this is a good script." How do you know?

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POV: Right. Would your relationship in this case be more with your co-producer, or would it be closer to being with Mor Loushy and Daniel Sivan?

Ina: Oh, all three. We all worked very closely together. Mor and Daniel came to Montreal for three weeks for post-production, and we gave a lot of notes on the cuts.

POV: It must have been hard, because it's such a complicated story. So, was one of the major issues here being able to access what's out there in terms of visual and written records? Because it's a history piece—it's not that long ago, but it's long enough that a lot of the major people are gone. That costs a lot of money—and how about access to the diaries? How did they get access to various, both oral and written accounts of what was happening?

Ina: Some we were given, and for others we had to make deals with publishers. Some are diaries, like literal diaries, and others are excerpts from books and writings and letters. Mor is one of the best researchers in documentary—she is really extraordinary when it comes to finding sources. That was a strength of this film in many ways. And then, how do you tell the story when the whole thing is behind closed doors? So, we did these re-enactments that are based on interviews and diaries, and sometimes you don't even know they're re-enactments, because we shot it on Betacam.

POV: That's very interesting. So, in a case like this, would they come back to you with cuts, and you would just simply say, "Good, but here's more questions"?

Ina: Always, of course.

POV: Were there any particular challenges in terms of getting it done in the proper amount of time and the proper amount of money?

Ina: Well, it was an expensive film. But, I feel we had enough time in the end, because the fine cut was what was sent to Sundance; it wasn't a rough film. Look—it's always about managing your resources in a project like this, because everyone's ambitions are very high, and archival costs are extraordinary, but we did fine in the end.

Liz Garbus and Trying to Print All the News that Fits

Director goes inside The New York Times circa Trump

By [Maurie Alioff](#) • Published May 6th, 2018 [1 Comment](#)



One of the highlights of Hot Docs 2018 was the International Premiere of director-producer's Liz Garbus's *The Fourth Estate*. Co-directed and produced by Jenny Carchman (*Enlighten Us, Koch*), *The Fourth Estate* is an ambitious exploration of *The New York Times* as the publication's staff grapples with Donald Trump hulking into the presidency of the U.S.A.

The four part series debuts on Showtime at the end of May. Hot Docs screened the first episode, which zeroes in on Trump's first 100 days. The first episode revisits familiar events like Michael Flynn's resignation as National Security Advisor, Trump's first speech to Congress, and the failure to repeal the Affordable Care Act through the eyes of Times reporters trying to navigate the frenzy of Trump Land, not to mention the side effects of their own personal turmoil.

A filmmaker since high school and a onetime intern at Miramax, New York-raised Garbus has covered a wide range of subjects in her docs, often focusing on high-pressure situations. *The Farm: Angola* (1998) takes you in close to prisoners in one of the most hopeless penitentiaries in America while *Girlhood* (2003) shows violated young women in a detention centre. Garbus's father, she points out during a Hot Docs interview, is a civil rights lawyer, whose world view must have influenced some of her subject choices.

The movingly poetic *Love, Marilyn* (2012) offers a meditation on Marilyn Monroe in which A-List actors like Glenn Close, Paul Giamatti, Uma Thurman and Viola Davis read from prose and poetry about MM as well as her own intimate writings. Garbus's best-known film, her Oscar-nominated *What Happened, Miss Simone?* (2015) both celebrates and elegizes one of the most unique and passionate black female performers in the history of jazz. Like the characters in *The Farm* and *Girlhood*, Marilyn Monroe and Nina Simone sought freedom but were also locked up, in the case of these brilliant women, by their own psyches. You could say the same of Garbus's

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protagonist in *Bobby Fischer Against the World* (2011), a doc about the troubled chess master's confrontation with Russian star Boris Spassky in 1972.

Other Garbus highlights as director and/or producer are *Nothing Left Unsaid: Gloria Vanderbilt & Anderson Cooper* (2016); *The Nazi Officer's Wife* (2003), about the relationship between a fugitive Austrian Jewish woman and the Nazi who loves her, knowing her true identity; *Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* (2007), and *Shouting Fire: Stories from the Edge of Free Speech* (2009). Her upcoming project is an HBO series adaptation of the late Michelle McNamara's investigative book, *I'll Be Gone in the Dark: One Woman's Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer*. The book recounts the author's pinpointing of James DeAngelo as the serial killer and rapist who terrorized California for a decade.

Episode One of *The Fourth Estate* opens on Donald Trump's inauguration. At the heart of the story is the sad truth that like other news media, *The New York Times* has never been in the position of trying to cover a presidency so deceptive and chaotic. In an early scene, executive editor Dean Baquet's is both incredulous and excited. A crazy-but-true story has just dropped. Baquet, the newspaper's first black executive editor, says of Trump's *modus operandi*, "Everybody's an asshole." So "how do you govern?"

Whatever Happened to Miss Simone? is a passionate movie, telling a tragic story about a soulful performing artist with a film approach that feels very different from *The Fourth Estate*'s. The approach and the subject matter of *The Fourth Estate* are far more cool and detached than the Oscar-nominated Simone bio-doc with all its music and its powerful main character. What did Garbus learn from her previous work and why, in my estimation, does it seem like a departure for her?

Liz Garbus replies, "I think as time goes on, we go deeper with the subjects. And the ideas marinate a bit further and deeper. Perhaps [in time] it will feel more akin to other stuff I made that you have seen."

Speaking further about *The Fourth Estate*, she says that it "is a dramatic, potentially tragic story as well. My first feature doc, *The Farm*, about the Louisiana State penitentiary, was more traditional verité reportage. As was a film I made called *Girlhood*. It is an area I've travelled in before. The Nina film was an incredibly special project, but shooting verité in heated environments is something that I've done before, and I really love doing."

As for the movie's focus on reporting news during an era of unprecedented attacks on the media, "I also made a film called *Shouting Fire: Stories from the Edge of Free Speech*, which is

POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE – May 6, 2018 (3 of 5)

about free speech challenges. My father is a First Amendment lawyer. *The Fourth Estate* feels more close to home in fact.”

Every day, The Trump Reality Show yields excoriating twists and turns. The story will obviously keep pushing forward, Do Garbus and her crew plan to jump back into it?

“This film is not about breaking news,” Garbus says. “It’s not about the Trump presidency. It’s about journalists adjusting to the seismic tidal wave in the political landscape, and figuring out how to cover it—how do they make sense of it? How do they gain transparency and sunlight into stories that are shrouded in secrecy? In that sense, the story is about that year of adjustment.”

The unfolding story could head toward something incredibly tragic. *King Lear* meets *Macbeth*. Garbus doesn’t completely rule out the possibility of jumping back in, but after a year of shooting *The Fourth Estate*, which wrapped recently, she’s obviously not seriously entertaining a return to the project.

Watching *The Fourth Estate*, you get the impression of Times staffers like Dean Baquet and Maggie Haberman tumbling into a rabbit hole and struggling to stay upright. In a key scene, Haberman who’s been covering Trump for years takes a call from him in the aftermath of his losing the Affordable Care Act vote. She asks if he’s glad it’s over with, and as if this is a chat between buddies, he answers, “Yeah, it’s enough already.” Haberman is the same journalist Trump claims he never speaks to and has called “third rate.”

The situation is preposterous, but the Times people diligently vet every story and rely on “teamwork which is important,” says Garbus. It “puts eyes on the story, and helps get it ready.” We see the reporters changing headlines and leads, meeting online deadlines, and setting up phone alerts. But as they discuss stories about outright lies like Trump’s claim that Obama was bugging him, they are obviously struggling to uphold *New York Times* standards while wading through an uncharted swamp. In a revealing moment, one of the staffers mutters, “It’s a farce!” When you know that you’re dealing with total absurdity, but you go ahead and take action anyway, you’re like one of Albert Camus’s existential heroes, performing a Sisyphean task.

“Everybody knew the wiretapping claim was untrue,” says Garbus. “But you have to cover it, because the president is saying it. It’s a huge challenge for news organizations to figure out how

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to cover this. The whole industry is reeling and trying to figure out how to deal with these busted norms.”

Garbus refers to Michelle Wolf, who had just delivered her scathing takedown of Trump Land and the media at the 2018 White House Correspondents’ Dinner. Garbus doesn’t elaborate, but she’s probably thinking that for someone like Wolf, covering Trump seriously, as if he were meeting the usual norms, legitimizes him and continues a mutually profitable symbiotic relationship with the media, ongoing since he bullshitted his way through the Manhattan social and business scenes.

Alternative media, like the late night comedians, would mock and satirize Trump, not taking him seriously.

“As Dean says,” Garbus responds, “There are a lot of outlets out there for Snark, for the easy hit. The Times has a role which is to head down the middle and tell it as it is without a lot of snarkiness, and that hopefully provides a public service because it invites more people in.”

As *The Fourth Estate* moves forward, it deepens its look at the Times coverage of the Russia investigation. Moreover, “In episode two, we talk about the changing model of the business,” Garbus explains. Jenny Carchman, also at the interview along with producer Justin Wilkes, adds, “It’s a new thing for them too. Normally, you would file a story, something that happened on Monday, for tomorrow’s paper. Now you file it within an hour.” “The news cycle doesn’t stop,” says Wilkes.

“We call episode two *The Trump Bump*,” Carchman continues. “It’s about the media getting an enormous amount of subscribers because of Trump, because of this story, and also having to face how they are going to survive as an institution. What’s the model of news? How to they persevere?”

As for the doc’s shooting approach, Carchman says, “This was pure *vérité*. The crew consisted of cameraman, soundman, Liz or myself. Everything is natural light. Everything is on the fly. Everything is incredibly intimate.

“The Washington DC office is very small, really tight. So to be there was a challenge because we were in everybody’s face.” On the other hand, “New York is big, big, big. Multi-floors with big

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open areas. So you could walk around and talk to people while the rest of the office is working fine.

“And they are under such pressure to tell the story, whether it’s policy, or palace intrigue. They’re not sure whether they totally have a hold on it. And us standing over them while they’re trying to figure things out was a challenge for them. Some people were okay. Some people could kinda forget about us. Others couldn’t. We did the best we could.”

Episode three of *The Fourth Estate* deals with the widening split between red and blue states while the fourth part emphasizes coverage of the #MeToo story while deepening the Russia story.

Judging from episode one of *The Fourth Estate*, the series handles its complexities with elegance and verve. Overall, it’s asking an important question about media coverage of a potentially dangerous media manipulator. As Wilkes puts it, “How do you report on this presidency in a way that is factual and accurate, but without continuing to feed into the machine?” How do you continue to publish “the news that’s fit to print?”

The Fourth Estate premieres on Crave TV on May 27.

Hot Docs runs April 26 to May 6. Please visit hotdocs.ca for more info.

Transformer wins Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary at Hot Docs Festival

By **GARNET FRASER** Toronto Star
Mon., May 7, 2018

The 2018 Hot Docs festival, which wrapped up on the weekend in Toronto, hit an attendance record with an estimated 223,000 people going to 471 screenings of 247 films at the 11-day event.

Last year's audience figure was 215,000.



Janae Marie Kroczaleski, formerly Matt Kroc, in her basement gym in the documentary *Transformer*. (J. GLIESMAN / COURTESY OF HOT DOCS)

Janae Marie Kroczaleski, formerly Matt Kroc, in her basement gym in the documentary *Transformer*. (J. GLIESMAN /COURTESY OF HOT DOCS)

On Sunday, the \$50,000 Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary went to director Michael Del Monte for *Transformer*, which tells the story of a world-record powerlifter transitioning from male to female.

The film also won the Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award for Del Monte and the Hot Docs Audience Award, voted on by filmgoers. The top five included *The Accountant of Auschwitz* (Canadian Matthew Shoychet); *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* (Morgan Neville); *The Game Changers* (Louie Psihoyos) and *On Her Shoulders* (Alexandria Bombach).

The festival handed out 13 awards and \$272,000 in cash and prizes.

The Best Canadian Feature Documentary Award went Friday to *A Little Wisdom*, which explores an isolated Buddhist monastery in Nepal through the eyes of a rambunctious 5-year-old novice.

Toronto Star – May 7, 2018 (2 of 2)

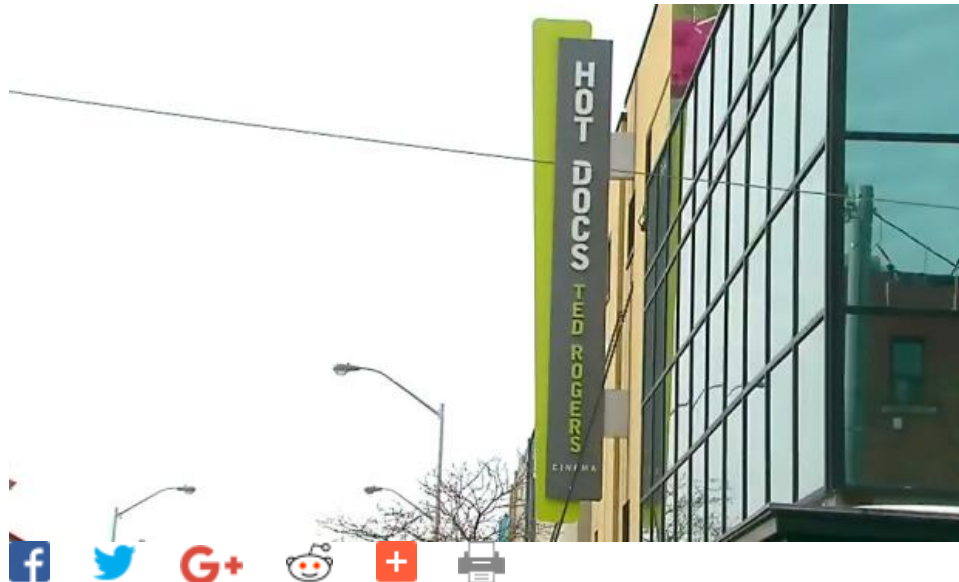
The Special Jury Prize for Canadian Feature Documentary was presented to *What Walaa Wants*, about a young woman who sets her sights on becoming one of the few women to join the Palestinian Security Forces.

The Special Jury Prize for International Feature Documentary was awarded to two documentaries: *Whispering Truth to Power* and *Wind of Swabia*.

With files from The Canadian Press

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2018/05/07/transformer-wins-rogers-audience-award-for-best-canadian-documentary-at-hot-docs-festival.html>

Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance



The Canadian Press

Published Monday, May 7, 2018 3:11PM EDT

TORONTO - The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival is boasting highest-ever attendance numbers for its latest instalment.

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Michael Del Monte's "Transformer" won this year's \$50,000 Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary.

The story -- which follows a powerlifter and former U.S. marine as he transitions into a woman -- also won the Hot Docs Audience Award.

Hot Docs awarded over \$272,000 in cash and prizes to films and filmmakers at this year's festival.

<https://www.cp24.com/entertainment-news/movie-tv-news/hot-docs-boasts-record-breaking-attendance-1.3918850>

'Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Updated: May 7, 2018

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Times Colonist – May 7, 2018

'Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance

The Canadian Press

MAY 7, 2018 11:57 AM

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<http://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/hot-docs-boasts-record-breaking-attendance-1.23293980>

The Province – May 7, 2018

'Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance



THE
CANADIAN
PRESS

The Canadian Press

Published: May 7, 2018

Updated: May 7, 2018 11:58 AM PDT

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<http://theprovince.com/pmn/entertainment-pmn/hot-docs-boasts-record-breaking-attendance/wcm/8c65f319-2eed-4374-b1e6-19cff45693e6>

The Chronicle Herald – May 7, 2018

'Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Published May 7, 2018 - 3:57pm

Last Updated May 7, 2018 - 4:05pm

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<http://www.thechronicleherald.ca/artslife/1568738-hot-docs-boasts-record-breaking-attendance>

CTV News – May 7, 2018

'Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance

The Canadian Press

Published Monday, May 7, 2018 3:26PM EDT

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<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/hot-docs-boasts-record-breaking-attendance-1.3918870>

The Record.com – May 7, 2018

Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance

WhatsOn May 07, 2018 The Canadian Press

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By The Canadian Press

<https://www.therecord.com/whatson-story/8593548-hot-docs-boasts-record-breaking-attendance/>

Niagara Falls Review – May 7, 2018

Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance

WhatsOn May 07, 2018 The Canadian Press

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By The Canadian Press

<https://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/whatson-story/8593548-hot-docs-boasts-record-breaking-attendance/>

'Hot Docs boasts 'record-breaking' attendance

Entertainment

by The Canadian Press

Posted May 7, 2018 2:57 pm EDT

Last Updated May 7, 2018 at 3:40 pm EDT

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‘Transformer’ Pulls One-Two Punch with Hot Docs Audience Awards

Posted on May 7th, 2018 • 0 Comments



Transformer

By Pat Mullen

Transformer stood strongest by the end of [Hot Docs](#)! Michael Del Monte's powerful portrait of transgender bodybuilder Janae Kroc scored both the Rogers Canadian Audience Award and the overall Audience Award from the festival. The Canadian announcement came Sunday night at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema where Del Monte was presented with a cheque for \$50,000 by Robin Mirsky, Executive Director of the Rogers Group of Funds for being the favourite as determined by the viewers. An encore presentation of *Transformer* followed with a Skype Q&A with Kroc and Del Monte in attendance. (Read more about *Transformer* and other trans stories in the new issue of [POV](#).)

Transformer held the top spot in the hunt for the Rogers Canadian Audience Award for the duration of the festival, but climbed into the overall lead as Canadian titles were masked to preserve an element of surprise. It was announced as the overall Audience Award winner today in a statement from the festival. The runner-up spot also went to a Canadian film as director Matthew Shoychet's acclaimed *The Accountant of Auschwitz* fended off Oscar winner Morgan Neville's *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* to come in at #2. *Neighbor* held the top spot early in the festival, but had little to gain with the award as one of the only films at the festival with a major distributor and a theatrical release set for June.

Hot Docs featured record-breaking audience numbers with an estimated 223,000 people attending 471 public screening and with a bustling marketplace drawing an international crowd from the documentary community. With its 25th anniversary, Hot Docs proved itself the best international film festival in Toronto.

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“Thank you to all of the exceptionally talented filmmakers who helped us celebrate our 25th anniversary Festival this year,” said Brett Hendrie, Hot Docs’ executive director, in a statement from the festival. “The stories you told captivated and inspired Festival audiences, further demonstrating the importance of documentary film and its ability to strengthen our connection to the people and world that surrounds us.”

The Top 20 docs in the hunt for the Audience Award are:

1. Transformer
2. The Accountant of Auschwitz
3. Won't You Be My Neighbor?
4. The Game Changers
5. On Her Shoulders
6. Bathtubs over Broadway
7. The Silver Branch
8. The Oslo Diaries
9. Pick of the Litter
10. The Silence of Others
11. United Skates
12. Primas
13. Letter from Masanjia
14. This Mountain Life
15. Mr. SOUL!
16. Laila at the Bridge
17. The Guardians
18. Warrior Women
19. Gurumul

Additionally, the audience favourite for short docs was Jamie Miller’s beautiful film *Prince’s Tale*, which also won the jury prize for Best Canadian Short on Friday, while Nitesh Anjaan’s *Dreaming Murakami* was named favorite mid-length doc, and Milica Zec’s topped the DOC-X projects.

<http://povmagazine.com/blog/view/transformer-pulls-one-two-punch-with-hot-docs-audience-awards>

Hot Docs '18: “We Could Be Heroes,” “A Little Wisdom” take top honors at awards

By Realscreen Staff

May 7, 2018



By Lauren Malyk, *Playback Daily*

A number of Canadian projects including director Yuqi Kang's *A Little Wisdom* and Michael Del Monte's *Transformer* claimed prizes over the weekend as Hot Docs wrapped its 25th edition.

A Little Wisdom (Blue Goat Films) picked up the prize for best Canadian feature doc at a presentation on Friday, May 4 at the University of Toronto's Isabel Bader Theatre. Produced by Kang and **Maro Chermayeff**, the feature follows a five-year-old novice at an isolated Buddhist monastery in Nepal. The doc received a CDN\$10,000 cash prize courtesy of Hot Docs.

Meanwhile, the emerging Canadian filmmaker award was presented to Del Monte for *Transformer* (Storystream Creative). The award, which is given to a first or second-time Canadian filmmaker with a feature film in the Canadian Spectrum program, includes a \$3,000 cash prize. In a separate announcement on Sunday, May 6, *Transformer* was named the winner of the Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary prize, which includes a \$50,000 cash prize.

Del Monte's film, which made its Canadian premiere at the fest, documents the story of a father, ex-marine and world-record powerlifter who transitions from male to female.

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In addition, the \$5,000 DGC Special Jury Prize – Canadian Feature Documentary went to *What Walaa Wants* (Murmur Media) from director Christy Garland. The Canada/Denmark coproduction tells the story of a young woman who wants to become one of the few women to join the Palestinian Security Forces. Producers on the project include Garland, Anne Köhncke, Matt Code and Justine Pimlott.

In the shorts category, director and producer Jamie Miller won the best Canadian short doc prize for *Prince's Tale*. The project, which won \$3,000 in cash, follows a young man who expresses himself through performance art and acting following a fire that drastically changed his body. *Vika* from director and producers **Christian Borys** and Marta Iwanek also received an honorable mention from the jury.

Fazila Amiri and Tim Tracey were awarded the Lindalee Tracey Award, picking up a hand-blown glass sculpture from Andrew Kuntz, \$5,000 from the Lindalee Tracey Fund and \$5,000 in post-production services from Technicolor. The award honors an emerging Canadian filmmaker with a passionate point of view, a strong sense of social justice and a sense of humor.

Meanwhile, international filmmakers also took home a number of awards, including director Hind Bensari's Denmark/Tunisia/Morocco/Qatar copro, *We Could Be Heroes* (pictured, produced by Vibeke Vogel and Habib Attia), which won the award for best international feature doc. The doc follows Paralympian Azzedine Nouiri, and his efforts to inspire his childhood friend, Youssef, to also take part in the Games.

Meanwhile, there was a tie for the Special Jury Prize – International Feature Documentary prize, with director Shameela Seedat's *Whispering Truth to Power* (South Africa) and Corrado Punzi's *Wind of Swabia* (Italy) splitting the \$5,000 prize. *Whispering Truth to Power* is produced by Seedat, Francois Verster, Neil Brandt, Brechtje Smidt and Millan Collin, while *Wind of Swabia* is produced by Davide Barletti.

Realscreen – May 7, 2018 (3 of 3)

Elsewhere, Elan Bogarín and **Jonathan Bogarín**, the directors behind **306 Hollywood** (U.S.), took home the Emerging International Filmmaker Award. The prize is given to a first or second-time international filmmaker with a feature film in the International Spectrum program. The jury also acknowledged Jill Magid, director of *The Proposal*, with an honorable mention.

Other international winners included director Enrico Maisto and producer Riccardo Annoni's *The Call* (Italy), which won the best mid-length doc prize; director/producer Christian Einshøj's *Haunted* (Denmark), which won the prize for best international short doc; and director Alexandria Bombach's *On Her Shoulders* (U.S.), produced by Hayley Pappas and Brock Williams, which won the Scotiabank Docs For Schools Student Choice Award.

Barbara Kopple and Montreal-based documentarian John Walker were also honored at this year's fest. Kopple received the 2018 Hot Docs Outstanding Achievement Award, while Walker was honored during the presentation as the recipient of this year's Hot Docs Focus On retrospective.

Earlier, on April 30, the fest named Montreal-based producer **Ina Fichman as this year's recipient of the Don Haig Award**, which recognizes outstanding Canadian producers. Fichman, who is the founder of Intuitive Pictures, was presented with the award along with a \$10,000 prize at the Friday ceremony.

<http://realscreen.com/2018/05/07/yuqi-kangs-a-little-wisdom-named-best-canadian-feature-at-hot-docs/>

Yuqi Kang's *A Little Wisdom* named best Canadian feature at Hot Docs

Michael Del Monte's *Transformer* also claimed a number of awards as the Toronto festival wrapped its 25th edition over the weekend.

By Lauren Malyk
May 7, 2018



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Del Monte's film, which made its Canadian premiere at the fest, documents the story of a father, ex-marine and world-record powerlifter who transitions from male to female. *Transformer* was one of five docs that previously picked up funding from [the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund in April 2017](#).

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PLAYBACK – May 7, 2018 (2 of 3)

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PLAYBACK – May 7, 2018 (3 of 3)

As part of the honour, the recipient can name an emerging female filmmaker to receive a \$5,000 cash prize and professional development opportunities at the Hot Docs Festival. She named Montreal-based producers Fanny Drew and Sarah Mannering from Colonelle Films as the recipients of the prize.

<http://playbackonline.ca/2018/05/07/yuqi-kangs-a-little-wisdom-named-best-canadian-feature-at-hot-docs/>

Hot Docs 2018 Review: THE RUSSIAN JOB Makes You Laugh on the Inside

A beautiful, dead-pan absurdist gem, the film is a rare comedy about modern labour in documentary form.

Kurt Halfyard

CONTRIBUTING WRITER; TORONTO, CANADA (@TRIFLIC)

May 7, 4:02 pm



How is this for an elevator pitch: What if Roy Andersson directed **Roger & Me**?

No pitch is necessary, because a collaboration between a Czech journalist, Petr Horký, and freelance photographer (and regular contributor to the New York Times) Milan Bures, has delivered a beautiful, dead-pan absurdist gem, **The Russian Job**.

Shot in the gargantuan AvtoVAZ factory in the city of Tolyatti, which is nestled on one of the widest stretches of the Volga River in Russia, everything in this movie is huge. The Lada monument at the front of the factory is the size of a building, and is still dwarfed by blocks upon blocks of factory space. It is a tribute to the size of everything in Russia when the state is involved (see also: China).

There is a recurring static shot of two red lights and a loud-speaker that dominate, like a perched pterodactyl or gargoyle, the endless buildings of the assembly plant, and the town

Screen Anarchy – May 7, 2018 (2 of 3)

beyond. Horký uses this like a title card to inject the set-up exposition to bring us up to date on the state of Russia's most mocked automobile.

The Lada facility has a surplus of employees and a dearth of production. The State, with all the requisite pomp and circumstance -- parades and rah-rah speeches and the like -- imports Swedish CEO Bo Andersson (no relation to **Songs From The Second Floor, You The Living** director, Roy, that I am aware of) who is a wunderkind in the private sector, having worked as a ranking executive worked General Motors, SAAB. Prior to his acquisition by AvtoVAZ, he turned around another Russian automaker, the privately run GAZ Group. He is gung ho (see what I did there) and ready to lead the efficient, agile, and lean revolution!

Bringing along his Czech wife as a PR executive, he enters the fray of entrenched 20th century, 'old Russia,' with a 21st century corporate machete, and the results, as documented here, are strange, albeit strangely familiar. The film's tagline is precise and apt, "They wanted a revolution, but nothing should change."

Horký was given access to the numerous recesses and inner workings of the factory, mainly because everyone assumed he was state media, not an independent journalist, the company voluntarily opens doors to some unusual places. Take for instance the Walrus Bathing Club, a company extra-curricular organization that facilitates regular Polar Bear Swims. They are looking for a new snow-blower to clear the path for the barefoot, perhaps slightly overweight, swimmers. The bureaucratic nightmare of getting funding, and the requisite passive-aggressive sniping, for the mythical snow machine is a sublime peak into the priorities and nature of the human spirit.

Or note the pop-cultural hallucination -- ok, capitalist nightmare -- involved in the re-launch of the signature Lada car. Rock music, young blond girls robo-Twerking, and reaction shots of the

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old-guard executives, as the shiny new economy-car rolls out under bright, social media, lights. Culture shock does not even begin to describe the friction: East meets West, Management vs. Worker, and workaholic culture surrounded by epic sized vacation opportunities. As a viewer you will likely find your sympathies ricocheted across the spectrum of characters; albeit Putin and the State vaguely loom in the background.

As the axe continues to hack away the dead-weight at the company, the inevitable workers strike looms, politics press down on the company, and nationalism rears its head. In the meantime, Bures keeps framing Andersson off center in his executive home with a Bear-pelt off to the side.

Remember how Errol Morris set up his subjects in **Gates of Heaven** to tell the story as much through framing as through what they were saying? The imagery and the effect here is not so much laugh-out-loud, but a more knowing smile-on-the-inside feeling. That does not diminish how deeply funny **The Russian Job** manages to be. This is a rare, humorous, take on modern labour movements, and it comes in documentary form. Come for the comedy, stay for the composition.

Women Fight to Be Seen at Cannes, Other Major Film Festivals

By **SIMRAN HANS**



CREDIT: JUN CEN FOR VARIETY

“I’m a supporter of positive discrimination in everyday life, but not in the selection process of Cannes. Filmmakers want to be considered as artists,” said Thierry Frémaux after the Cannes lineup was announced.

Frémaux, director of the fest, is expected to announce further measures in support of anti-harassment initiatives at a Monday press conference in advance of the fest’s opening.

His earlier remarks came in defense of the world’s most high-profile festival selecting only three female-helmed films for its 2018 competition. While observers had hoped that in the wake of #MeToo and Time’s Up movements, gender pay parity and inclusion riders, Cannes would reconsider its attitude toward women directors, Frémaux’s answer is both honest and disingenuous.

Honest because women helmers will tell you that it’s true — they are artists and should be considered as such, just as their male counterparts are — but disingenuous because what the debate has illuminated is the lack of avenues for women helmers to create films worthy of Cannes. Or any other world-class festival.

Despite increased scrutiny, the lack of female filmmakers in competition is neither new nor interesting, with the conversation around it at a kind of stalemate — a problem repeatedly acknowledged, but rarely addressed.

Cannes is not the only culprit here, with the Venice Film Festival screening only one female-directed film in competition in 2017 (Vivian Qu’s “Angels Wear White”).

“I don’t think it’s our fault. ... I’m sorry that there are very few films from women this year, but we are not producing films,” said festival director Alberto Barbera at the time.

“A differentiation should be made between female filmmakers and Time’s Up,” Frémaux said in April.

While there is a differentiation between the widespread normalization of sexual harassment in the film industry and a lack of female directors, to suggest there is no correlation at all is to gloss over the ways in which women are not welcome in the movie-making workplace.

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Several international film festivals have acknowledged this link. Actions include introducing codes of conduct for festival delegates (Sundance, SXSW and Tribeca) in an attempt to create safer spaces for women in environments where booze, parties and dealmaking frequently collide, as well as more deliberate attempts to reach gender parity across film programs.

Eight of 10 films in SXSW's narrative competition and 46% of Tribeca's pic slate were directed by women, while this year's Hot Docs boasts a 50/50 gender split in its filmmakers, as well as a themed strand of films and talks titled Silence Breakers, about female whistleblowers.

Sundance London has responded to the #MeToo and Time's Up movements by asking #WhatsNext. Following Sundance's lead, in which 21 of 56 competition films were directed by women, the festival's London offshoot features an 11-film competition with seven of the films made by women.

Sundance London director of programming Clare Binns says: "When we sat down at the end of Sundance back in January and made a list of films we wanted, it was not on our minds to specifically target films made by women. It just so happened also that a large quantity of the invited films were made by women. The quality of the films we invited was also extremely high, higher than it has ever been. Go figure."

A milder way to put women in the spotlight might be to do so in a literal sense. Cannes officials say they aim for gender balance in the competition jury, and this year is no exception, with Cate Blanchett as president, joined by Kristen Stewart, Ava DuVernay, Khadja Nin and Lea Seydoux.

Binns says of this year's Cannes: "They have made a great point of their juries being diverse, but the programming to me still seems very skewed, gender-wise, towards older male filmmakers. But I think any steps aimed at balancing things out, achieving some sort of parity, can only be a good thing."

Yet there still remains the concern that festivals' interest in #MeToo and Time's Up is simply political posturing — a cynical attempt to remain relevant without questioning their own practice. This year's Berlinale saw a dedicated symposium that tackled the issue of gender parity, but was criticized for its endorsement of Korean filmmaker Kim Ki-duk, who was invited to present "Human, Space, Time and Human" in its Panorama sidebar despite being embroiled in a court case accusing him of assaulting an actress on set.

Similarly, this year's Cannes sees the return of Lars Von Trier with "The House That Jack Built" — his Zentropa Studios co-founder Peter Aalbaek Jensen (and film's producer) has faced sexual harassment allegations from nine female employees. Von Trier has also been accused by Bjork of sexual harassment. He denies the allegations.

The suggestion of "no platforming" artists with troubled histories is an unpopular one, though what's at stake here is perhaps less a question of censorship than it is of legitimization — of who is inoculated by power, and whose professional reputations are at risk.

<https://variety.com/2018/film/festivals/cannes-thierry-fremaux-metoo-timesup-1202800225/>

Detroit Free Press – May 7, 2018 (1 of 2)

Cinetopia's 2018 lineup will bring Gilda Radner documentary to her Detroit hometown

Julie Hinds, Detroit Free Press Pop Culture Critic Published 2:58 p.m. ET May 7, 2018 | Updated 4:35 p.m. ET May 7, 2018

The 2018 Cinetopia Film Festival will feature "Love, Gilda," the new documentary about Detroit-born "Saturday Night Live" great Gilda Radner, as its closing night movie.

Cinetopia, which runs May 31 to June 10, is slated to bring 44 films to 10 venues in Ann Arbor, Dearborn and Detroit. The annual event has become a must for cinephiles who flock to its lineup of festival favorites and works with Michigan ties.



"Love, Gilda" recently won over audiences at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City and the Hot Docs festival in Toronto. It will be shown June 10 at the Detroit Film Theatre at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Also on Cinetopia list is the Midwest premiere of "Eighth Grade," an opening night film that made waves at the Sundance Film Festival for its funny, painful look at contemporary teenage angst. Director Bo Burnham is scheduled to be at the Michigan Theater screening in Ann Arbor on May 31.



Detroit native Gilda Radner and Jane Curtin in "Saturday Night Live." (Photo: NBC)

Detroit Free Press – May 7, 2018 (2 of 2)

Director Alan Rudolph is this year's special guest at the University of Michigan film symposium that's become an annual part of Cinetopia. Rudolph will attend a panel discussion on his work and several of his best-known movies, from 1984's "Choose Me" to 1988's "The Moderns."

"Ray Meets Helen," Rudolph's first new film in 15 years, also will be getting its Michigan debut. It stars Keith Carradine and Sondra Locke.

Also collaborating with Cinetopia as usual is the 2018 Arab Film Festival, which is presented by the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn.

Among its many highlights are a short film program celebrating female Arab filmmakers and the Michigan premiere of "This Is Home," which took home an audience award at Sundance for its documentary look at four Syrian families trying to make a new life in Baltimore in the midst of the Trump administration's travel ban.

Other can't-miss films on the Cinetopia slate include:

- **"Blindspotting,"** a drama with Tony-winning "Hamilton" star Daveed Diggs as a man trying to finish the last days of his probation and start a new life who hits a snag when he misses curfew.
- **"A Boy, A Girl, A Dream: Love on Election Night,"** the latest from Ann Arbor filmmaker Qasim Basir. In it, Omari Hardwick and Meagan Good play two people who meet on the evening of the 2016 presidential election.
- **"Savage Youth,"** director Michael Curtis Johnson's based-on-real-life exploration of six young Americans. It is described as "bold, brutal, brilliant" by the festival guide. Johnson is an alumnus of Eastern Michigan University.
- **"Thirst for Justice,"** a rough cut of University of Michigan fellow Leana Hosea's documentary on three female activists, from Flint and Arizona, who fight for clean water and meet at the Dakota Access Pipeline demonstrations.

For a full schedule of movies and ticket information, go to CinetopiaFestival.org.

Active Measures director says Trump's Russian mob ties are his biggest legal vulnerability

CBC Radio · May 8



US President Donald Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin shake hands during a meeting in Hamburg, Germany, on July 7, 2017. (SAUL LOEB/AFP/Getty Images)

Listen 9:40

by **Brent Bambury**

As Donald Trump's legal team changed this week, so did the version of events relating to the transfer of hush money to a porn star. The admission made on Wednesday by Rudy Giuliani that Trump knew about the payment — a reversal of Trump's earlier claim — took the White House by surprise.



Adult film actress/director Stormy Daniels in January of 2017. (Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

But on Friday morning Trump put some distance between himself and Giuliani without clarifying the ever confusing details of the payment.

Those details matter because the payment could constitute a violation of campaign finance law.

Trump may be vulnerable on that front, or Robert Mueller may find evidence of collusion with Russia or obstruction that would expose the president to other charges.

CBC Radio (Day 6) – May 8, 2018 (2 of 6)

Jack Bryan believes Trump's legal vulnerabilities go back even further, predating his presidency.

"I think he's got very serious legal problems," Bryan says on *Day 6*. But they might not be the problems raised by Stormy Daniels.

Once he loses out in Atlantic City, once he can't get a loan from a bank, that's when the Russian mafia says: 'We have an opportunity here.' - *Jack Bryan, director of Active Measures*
Bryan's first feature length documentary, *Active Measures*, takes a long look at malevolent Russian influence, but it converges on Trump, his association with Russian mobsters and the Russian money that kept him in business.

Vanity Fair asks: "Is This the Documentary That Can Take Down Trump?"

A better question might be: 'How mad will this make Putin?'



US President Donald Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin talk during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders' summit on November 11, 2017. (Getty Images)

Shell companies buy condos

Active Measures shows how foreign investments made by Russian oligarchs bolster the Kremlin's ambitions to exert influence in the west. The key is money laundering — the export of Russian wealth with the knowledge and approval of Putin.



The Trump Taj Mahal, now known as Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City, in Atlantic City, New Jersey. (CP Images)

Bryan says mobsters were Trump clients as early as 1985.

"He sells three condos to a man named David Bogatin, who's a Russian mobster," Bryan says. "This is in Trump Tower. And the reason they did Trump Tower is that it was the second building in New York where a shell company could purchase a condominium. And so it makes it much more easy to launder dirty money."

When Trump's fortunes fall, the Russians smell blood.

"Once he loses out in Atlantic City, once he can't get a loan from a bank, that's when the Russian mafia says: 'We have an opportunity here,'" says Bryan.

That's when Trump becomes less of a partner for Russian mobsters and more of a mark.

Bryan's film alleges that Trump needed Russian mob money to reinvent himself after his disastrous string of bankruptcies. Without it, the film alleges, he would never have won the presidency.

CBC Radio (Day 6) – May 8, 2018 (4 of 6)

"The Russians saved him. They rescued him. He would not have gotten back in business without them," journalist Craig Unger says in the film.



Cars pass by a billboard showing US President-elect Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin placed by pro-Serbian movement in the town of Danilovgrad on November 16, 2016. (Savo Prelevic/AFP/Getty Images)

Bayrock Group, Sater and Cohen

After multiple bankruptcies, when most of Trump's investors had fled, a real estate firm with Russian backing moved into Trump Tower. Bryan's film sees this as a turning point, an intensification of Russian interference and a new source of wealth for Trump.



Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's personal attorney, walks along a sidewalk in New York on April 11, 2018. (Seth Wenig/Associated Press)

"Bayrock Group is a Russian real estate firm. The manager was this guy Felix Sater, and he is very connected to the Russian mafia," Bryan says.

Sater, a convicted felon, also has ties to Trump's recently fired attorney, Michael Cohen. Bryan says Cohen entered the Trump organization at the same time as Bayrock.

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"Cohen is childhood friends with Felix Sater. They went on their first date together," Bryan says. "They did a lot of business together."

Bayrock operated from offices two floors below Trump's and partnered with him on a wide variety of real estate deals from 2002 to 2011. Bryan says Bayrock likely didn't see Trump as a political player or a potential president. They saw him as a shield.

"I think, at that point, they're seeing him as: he's a really famous guy and it's great cover because nobody's going to question a lot of money going into the Trump organization. And they knew that he needed the money. And also they knew he's really litigious. And so it would be really hard to go after him. And I think that he just became this sort of perfect place to stash money."



Donald Trump and Felix Sater. (Shooting Films)

How money laundering could be exposed

Through this period, Sater remained in contact with his old friend Michael Cohen. A series of emails between the two, written during the campaign, appeared last year in the New York Times.

The FBI raided Michael Cohen's office and home on April 9th. Bryan says it could mark a turning point in the investigation of the president.



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FBI Director Robert Mueller. (Alex Wong/Getty Images)

"I think Cohen knows just about everything," he says.

He points to the significance of the Cohen case being handled by the US attorney's office for the Southern District of New York, and recounts Trump's warning to Robert Mueller.

"The early laundering, the real serious laundering you see from 2004 all the way to 2014, that is going to be taken as a separate case by the Southern District of New York. And I think the reason for that is that Trump, at one point, said that it will be crossing a red line if he looked at his personal business dealings."

Bryan chooses to end *Active Measures* with images of resistance, but he warns democracy needs more action to withstand an onslaught that he describes as the organized, effective and corrupt influence exported by Russia.

"If we want to deal with this, we have to address the underlying problems," he says. "And if we do it, really, if people demand that we do that, I think that in the long run this could have been a really positive thing. If we don't, then I think we're going down a really dark path."



Traditional Russian nesting dolls depicting US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are displayed at a souvenir street shop in St. Petersburg, Russia. (Dmitri Lovetsky/Associated Press)

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/day6/episode-388-trump-s-mob-ties-new-brunswick-flood-muterkelly-p-k-subban-s-dad-mercury-13-and-more-1.4646381/active-measures-director-says-trump-s-russian-mob-ties-are-his-biggest-legal-vulnerability-1.464640>

'Active Measures': Film Review | Hot Docs 2018

11:22 AM PDT 5/8/2018 by Frank Scheck

Jack Bryan's documentary delivers a comprehensive account of Russia's efforts to interfere in our presidential election.

An opening title card in Jack Bryan's documentary *Active Measures* informs us that its title stems from a "Soviet term for the actions of political warfare conducted by Russian security forces to influence the course of world events." For nearly two hours, the rest of the film proceeds to chronicle, in exhaustive and sometimes exhausting detail, Russia's efforts to meddle in our election and the symbiotic relationship, as yet not fully disclosed, between the country's ruler and oligarchs and Donald Trump. While the headline of a recent *Vanity Fair* article about the film, "Is This the Documentary That Can Take Down Trump?," is certainly hyperbole, *Active Measures* delivers a well-researched and smartly laid-out cinematic thesis that connects the myriad dots in skillful fashion. Recently given its world premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs festival, the movie should find receptive audiences in theatrical and ancillary formats, provided that current events don't overtake it.

One of the doc's strengths is the amazing number of "gets" procured by the filmmakers. Among the onscreen interview subjects are Hillary Clinton, John McCain, John Podesta and a dizzying array of diplomats, CIA officials and journalists who lend considerable credibility to the proceedings.

Active Measures begins with a short biography of Vladimir Putin in which the Russian leader's fervent desire to restore the Soviet Union to its former glory is brought into sharp psychological focus. From there, things get complicated, as director Bryan and co-screenwriter Marley Clements examine topics including Russia's interference in elections in various countries and the relationship between Russia and Trump that includes money laundering and many other financial ties. Suffice it to say that if you start a drinking game revolving around the use of the phrase "shell companies," you'll be thoroughly sloshed long before the film is over.

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The sheer volume of information, while admirably thorough, sometimes proves overwhelming. No less than 29 commentators (including the aforementioned) weigh in via brief interview segments, and at times it's hard to remember who's who. Seemingly every tangent — ranging from Paul Manafort to Deutsche Bank to the manipulation of social media to a rogues' gallery of Russian oligarchs and gangsters — is explored, and even those viewers already familiar with much of the material will be confronted with new and startling facts. At the same time, *Active Measures* fails to provide the smoking gun necessary to make it as politically and legally impactful as it clearly aspires to be.

Although the doc doesn't entirely resist the understandable temptation toward the histrionic — its ominous musical score gives it the feel of a horror film — it proves effectively methodical in its arguments, which are buttressed by copious amounts of archival footage. It certainly serves as an effective primer on an important subject, infusing its chronicle of slow-motion espionage on a grand scale with important historical context. The proceedings include some amusing moments as well, such as when one interview subject bursts out laughing when asked how Russia launders money in America. "Everything I know that's interesting, I can't tell you," he replies.

It would be nice to imagine that the doc would have the power to sway hearts and minds. Sadly, it has been proven time and time again that most everyone inclined to support Trump seems to have an aversion to facts, no matter how impressively they're laid out. But for those already well aware of Russia's nefarious efforts to sabotage our democracy and Trump's apparent willingness to help them do it, *Active Measures* provides a well-organized, seemingly comprehensive account of how it happened.

Production company: Shooting Films

Director: Jack Bryan

Screenwriters: Jack Bryan, Marley Clements

Producers: Laura Dubois, Marley Clements

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Executive producer: Andrew Napier

Director of photographer: Neil Barrett

Editor: Andrew Napier

Composers: Doran Danoff, John MacCallum

Venue: Hot Docs

112 minutes

'93Queen': Film Review | Hot Docs 2018

12:01 PM PDT 5/8/2018 by Frank Scheck

Paula Eiselt's documentary chronicles the creation of the first all-female Hasidic EMT corps.

Forget Supergirl and Wonder Woman. To see a real female superhero in action, check out Paula Eiselt's documentary concerning the creation of an all-female, Hasidic EMT corps. *93Queen* centers on Rachel "Ruchie" Freier, the co-founder of the organization that gives the film its title, and watching this intrepid woman in constant exhausting motion will make even the biggest overachiever feel like a slacker. Recently given its world premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs festival, the pic should easily find appreciative audiences upon theatrical distribution.

Set in Borough Park, Brooklyn, a neighborhood containing the largest ultraorthodox Jewish community in the U.S., the doc chronicles Freier's efforts to establish the history-making organization. The community had been served since 1969 by the all-male Hatzolah, the largest volunteer ambulance force in the world. But Freier is determined to provide an alternative for Hasidic women whose religious beliefs have infused them with a powerful sense of modesty. The film includes an interview segment with one Hatzolah member whose identity is disguised because the organization prohibits its members from speaking to the media.

As quickly becomes evident, Freier is a force of nature, a mother of six children and a practicing attorney who earned her law degree at age 40. Her efforts to establish the female corps dubbed Ezras Nashim (Women for Women) result in fierce opposition from many of the community's men, and more than a few of its women, who think, as one man puts it, that "the focus of a woman is being a mother." A community website accuses the group of, among other things, "challenging the Torah," and Freier and its other members are accused of being "radical feminists." The neighborhood rabbis decline to endorse them, but that doesn't deter Freier. "It's God's endorsement that's most important, and I believe we have God's endorsement," she

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says. Someone even writes to the school that Freier's daughters attend to complain about her being named Mother of the Year.

Never cowing to the difficulties, Freier soldiers on, and the female EMT corps quickly proves highly successful. The group is eventually recognized by the New York City Fire Department, which assigns it the code "93Queen." But that success isn't enough for its co-founder, who then moves on to her next goal: running for civil court judge. Not surprisingly, she encounters headwinds in that matter as well.

"It's not modest for a woman to be a judge!" a man tells her on the street where she's handing out fliers.

Spoiler alert: Freier wins the election, with her proud, supportive husband by her side. In the process, she becomes the first Hasidic woman to ever hold public office in the U.S. And, as the film illustrates, probably the first judge to bake her own challah bread as well.

93Queen is rough-hewn technically and, although it includes brief interviews with several other members of the female EMT corps, it would have benefited from a wider focus. But it's excusable that the filmmaker would concentrate so much on her central figure, whose fierce intelligence and indomitable spirit render her truly inspirational.

Production company: Malka Films

Director-director of photography: Paula Eiselt

Producers: Paula Eiselt, Heidi Reinberg

Executive producers: Sally Jo Fifer, Justine Nagan, Chris White, Marco Williams

Editors: Rebecca Laks, Sunita Prasad

Composer: Laura Karpman

Venue: Hot Docs

85 minutes

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/93queen-1109845>

'The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret': Film Review | Hot Docs 2018

10:03 AM PDT 5/9/2018 by Frank Scheck

Barry Avrich's documentary recounts the story of Harvey Weinstein's downfall and the rise of the #MeToo movement.

You can feel director Barry Avrich and his editors Michele Hozer and Darby MacInnis struggling to keep up with the fast-paced events featured in his documentary about Harvey Weinstein and the #MeToo movement. *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* is generally effective as a fast-paced primer on the sexual harassment scandals that have swept show business in the last year but doesn't really add much to the story that we don't already know. The film was a last-minute addition to Toronto's Hot Docs festival, where it received its world premiere.

Avrich is more than a little familiar with his subject, having previously directed the little-seen 2011 documentary *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project*. That film failed to deal with the rumors regarding Weinstein's predatory behavior that were well known in the industry, but it was made when its subject was at the height of his power and no one was willing to go on the record.

As we all know, that situation has changed dramatically. This doc lays out the story in generally methodical, straightforward fashion, although Avrich doesn't resist the opportunity to invest musical irony into the proceedings with the use of such recordings as Nina Simone's "Sinnerman" and Leonard Cohen's "Everybody Knows." He also includes repeated close-ups of photos of Weinstein looking very unattractive, which is akin to shooting fish in a barrel.

Although there are no interviews with the familiar figures harassed by Weinstein such as Ashley Judd and Rose McGowan, we hear from several of his other victims including actress Melissa Sagemiller, describing his aggressive sexual advances during the shooting of the 2001 Miramax comedy *Get Over It*, and journalist Lauren Sivan, recounting the heavily reported story of how Weinstein, during a tour of the restaurant he owned, masturbated in front of her. Several of Weinstein's former employees weigh in as well, such as publicist Mark Urman, who describes the people who worked at Miramax as "walking ulcers," and Weinstein's former assistant Zelda

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Perkins, who comments, "With Harvey, there was no such word as *no*." Among the journalists providing astute commentary are Ken Auletta, the late David Carr and *The Hollywood Reporter's* own Kim Masters.

You would think the Weinstein story alone would provide plenty of material for a documentary, and a not particularly long one at that. So it's surprising that Avrich decided to also include cursory accounts of allegations involving the likes of Bill O'Reilly, Louis C.K., Aziz Ansari, James Toback and Donald Trump. The film even features a segment on Woody Allen's alleged sexual abuse of his daughter Dylan Farrow, which is arguably very different from the other stories discussed. You get the feeling it was included mainly because Avrich was able to procure a rare onscreen interview with Farrow herself.

The doc also includes a brief history of the Hollywood "casting couch"; a delve into the subject of non-disclosure agreements and their suppression of the truth; a profile of street artist Sabo, who blanketed Hollywood with anti-Meryl Streep posters; and the backlash to the #MeToo movement, including the letter signed by such French notables as Catherine Deneuve.

The film's attempt to be so overly all-encompassing ultimately proves its undoing. Never digging too deeply under the surface, *The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret* will prove revelatory only to those viewers whose heads have been stuck in the sand for the past year.

Production company: Melbar Entertainment Group

Director: Barry Avrich

Producers: Barry Avrich, Melissa Hood

Executive producer: Patrice Theroux

Director of photography: Ken Ng

Editors: Michele Hozer, Darby MacInnis

Production designer: Paul Grundy

Venue: Hot Docs

90 minutes

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/reckoning-hollywoods-worst-kept-secret-1110201>

Hot Docs 2018: The Silver Anniversary Edition



The White World According to Dailborek

by [Lauren Wissot](#)

in [Festivals & Events](#)

on May 9, 2018

[Documentary](#), [Elaine McMillion Sheldon](#), [Hot Docs 2018](#), [Katja Fedulova](#), [Sergei Loznitsa](#), [The Silence of Others](#), [TIFF Bell Lightbox](#), [Vít Klusák](#)

The 25th anniversary edition of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival (April 26-May 6) marked my very first visit to North America's largest nonfiction fest (and also to its host city of Toronto, for that matter). Since I've covered IDFA, the world's largest doc fest, numerous times, I just assumed Hot Docs would be similar in setup and vibe. On the contrary, I was pleasantly surprised to find there are several key elements that make this Toronto mainstay its own exciting, one-of-a-kind event.

First off, there are the unique venues. Hot Docs is the only festival I've ever been to, fiction or nonfiction, with its own fest-branded theaters. Amongst the dozen-plus cinemas and media spaces utilized there's the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a lovely, former repertory art-house in The Annex district — and the first theater (and one of only three in the world) dedicated to exclusively showing docs year-round. And then there's Hot Docs' main screening location in the Entertainment District, the incomparable TIFF Bell Lightbox, which also is the site of Toronto International Film Festival screenings.

Fortunately, my trip to this silver anniversary edition came courtesy of Tourism Toronto, which also provided a culturally jam-packed "Hollywood of the North" junket for visiting press that included a docent-led tour of the Lightbox. Occupying five floors and an entire city block(!), the gorgeous, glass-and-steel complex contains five theaters, two restaurants, a rooftop terrace, gallery and exhibition spaces, a gift shop, and a reference library. Which made me think that the closest comparison we have in NYC is not to FSLC but to MoMA. Connected to the Lightbox is the Festival Tower, which houses condos that come not only with a private screening room but

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also all-around access to the Lightbox below. (Disappointingly, the tour did not include knocking on any wealthy cinephiles' doors.) Our passionate and thorough guide gave us the lowdown on everything from the environmentally friendly structure (which, like all of Toronto's skyscrapers, has frosted windowpanes to prevent birds from crashing), to the Lightbox's theater seats (designed by the same firm as the ones at Cannes). And the fact that the driving force behind both the theater and the transformation (gentrification?) of its surrounding neighborhood was proud Torontonians, the Reitman family. (Director Ivan also owns the local restaurant Montecito.)

But long before a Czech Jewish immigrant family made it big in (North) America there were the First Nations, the indigenous people's acknowledgment before every screening also marking a first for me. Indeed, every onstage presenter thanked the specific tribes for the use of their land before any corporation or government body was given a hat-tip. When I asked a Toronto producer I met at the Forum (North America's premiere pitching event for nonfiction filmmakers seeking international co-financing) whether this was genuine atonement or some sort of politically correct lip service he assured me it was the former, comparing Canada's current indigenous rights awakening to Black Lives Matter in scope.

It struck me that this tied into another aspect that sets Hot Docs apart — its emphasis on public outreach. Indeed, the folks behind the scenes seem every bit as focused on making the festival broadly accessible to everyone from students to the disabled as they are on tending to the thriving industry market. And this ease of accessibility extended to the navigation of the event itself, with most venues located within walking distance of one another. Add to that a carefully curated program, divided into 15 well-thought-out sections that prevented an attendee from feeling overwhelmed, while leaving just enough room for accidental discovery. There were the special presentations (food was a big theme this year, with Canadian director Maya Gallus's female chef-focused *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* opening the fest) and special events, many of them free. One especially inventive selection was the world premiere of *The Trolley*, from another Canadian director, Stephen Low, which follows the history of public transit's electric car — in IMAX. In addition, since Barbara Kopple was this year's recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award, a retrospective of a half dozen of that master filmmaker's most beloved works were shown. (Canadian director John Walker also received a retrospective with Focus on John Walker, which presented five of his films going all the way back to '89. And for those who still couldn't get enough retro there was always the Redux program.)

And balancing out the self-explanatory sections — International Spectrum, Canadian Spectrum, World Showcase, Made in Mexico — were some unconventional programs, such as the artist-as-subject films collected under the umbrella of Artscapes, and the "future cult classics" of Nightscapes. Then there was DocX, which, in addition to presenting VR, included other new media in the form of live performance and video installation. Even more ambiguous were sections titled The Changing Face of Europe (a partnership with European Film Promotion, which boasted a wide range of co-productions highlighting stories from the Balkans to the

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Baltic), Silence Breakers (a MeToo-spirited series of docs co-presented with Oxfam Canada), and The Good Fight (flicks about battles from the global to the personal, sometimes both).

That last program happened to feature several riveting, but yet to be buzzed about, Spotlight on Documentaries at IFP Week alums. There was *The Silence of Others*, from the team of Almudena Carracedo and Robert Bahar (with the Almodóvars EP'ing), a striking look at the “Argentine Lawsuit,” in which those tortured under Spain’s dictatorship took their claims for justice to Buenos Aires because Spanish law prevents the prosecution of any Franco-era crime. And also the international premiere of Elaine McMillion Sheldon’s Netflix doc *Recovery Boys*, which returns the native West Virginian to her home state to follow four opioid-addicted men over a roller-coaster-riding year and a half as they valiantly struggle to stay clean at a rural rehab center.

And while there were a slew of high-quality docs addressing social justice and hot topic issues, there were also nearly 250 films to choose from during a mere 11 days. Which is another way of saying that, as a docophile, I generally sidestep seeing “important” subjects and current events depicted onscreen in favor of discovering new cinematic visions. Fortunately, Hot Docs provided a wealth to choose from in that regard as well.

While not exactly a new discovery, Sergei Loznitsa (probably still best known for 2014’s stunning *Maidan*) nevertheless is fast becoming one of my favorite nonfiction auteurs. Much like with *Austerlitz*, his magnificent 2016 study of the Nazi concentration camp as modern-day tourist attraction, the Ukrainian director brings his eye for exquisite, nearly painterly composition, and his ear for surreal disconnect (especially in our smartphone addicted society) to the subject of one of Germany’s stranger traditions in *Victory Day*. For the past 72 years Berlin has hosted an annual commemoration of the USSR’s triumph over Nazism, an event that brings together everyone from nostalgic communists to members of the notorious Night Wolves biker gang for a day of dancing and drinking, flag waving and speechifying. And because Loznitsa is a master of observation he’s able to distill this freewheeling circus into a caged zoo exhibit, capturing momentous history as kitsch. Celebratory revelers, bodies moving in Brueghel-like detail, are shone in stark contrast to the still stone tableaux he cuts to throughout — monuments to a war of anguish, brutality, suffering and sacrifice. A pyrrhic victory, indeed.

Berlinale Talent Katja Fedulova is also solidly on my filmmaker-to-watch list. With *Faith Hope Love* the Russian expat, who resides in Germany, returns home after many years to find out what exactly it means to be a feminist in Putin’s Russia. Fedulova has — to steal a term coined by Deidre Haj to describe Jehane Noujaim at a panel I caught at April’s Full Frame fest — “soft eyes” (like athlete’s have “soft hands”). It’s the ability to predict which characters are going to be worth following long before anything gets interesting — a talent Fedulova possesses in spades. *Faith Hope Love* is an eye-opening portrait of the complicated, unendingly contradictory lives of three young “heroines” making waves in Russia today — a country in which nothing is black or white, or even what it seems. It’s a nation in which beauty queens go to war, “feminists” are religious and pro-life, and anti-corruption politicians may have to make unseemly compromises.

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Which, in a place where state-approved news is the basis for reality, may not be all that surprising after all.

Then there's what will surely go down as one of my favorite docs of 2018 (that is, once some intrepid US distributor takes a chance on these shores). I've been following longtime provocateur Vít Klusák's — one of the directors behind the fake supermarket hoax that was 2004's *Czech Dream* — *The White World According to Dailborek* since CPH:DOX. (And on through the Docudays UA fest in Kiev, where, if there was a prize for most hated film of that festival, this would have been it.) Hot Docs allowed me to re-watch and sing the praises of this thrillingly insane film yet again.

From the very beginning we're told *White World* is a "documentary play," which should give you some indication as to how this portrait of a Nazi-loving, internet-addicted, grown man who still lives with his mother will probably unfold. The 36-year-old Dali is nothing if not theatrical, enlisting both long-suffering mom and her new boyfriend in his numerous YouTube videos (in which he acts out horror film-style murders of blacks and immigrants). He also writes inventive songs, one about a hermaphrodite that has so much "cheek" that he "fucks himself like a geek." Yet when a friend tells Dali that he gets that he's into "all that Nazism... That's nice," as if it's just a harmless hobby, one has to stop and wonder if, well, maybe it is.

For what makes the film so hilarious is the fact that these characters are both so powerless and so full of shit. (If Dali were Richard Spencer this film would not work.) Even while the mother's boyfriend brags about beating up gypsies, one look at him and you know it's all lying braggadocio. Indeed, we almost feel sorry for the family, especially Dali and his stalled existence. (It's sympathy not for the devil, but for the devil poseurs.) Besides, this contrast between the ridiculous and Klusák's formally composed images, elegant camerawork, and dark melancholy score is closer to the warped, heavily stylized vibe of Nicolas Winding Refn than it is to any semblance of real life. Ultimately, *The White World According to Dailborek* is a gorgeous, bright and kitsch-filled confection with black humor at its core — a way to make highly visible the true absurdity of hate.

'Bachman': Film Review | Hot Docs 2018

6:07 AM PDT 5/13/2018 by Frank Scheck



Courtesy of Hot Docs

John Barnard's documentary profiles Canadian rock god Randy Bachman, veteran of The Guess Who and Bachman-Turner Overdrive.

The most emotionally revealing segment in John Barnard's documentary about Randy Bachman doesn't involve any of the Canadian rock god's friends, family or musical collaborators. Rather, it involves what everyone seems to agree is Bachman's closest relationship, that with his guitars. Leading us on a guided tour of a warehouse containing his collection of a seemingly endless number of the musical instruments, Bachman beams at them with pride and joy, lovingly handling them as if they were newborn babes. It's a charming sequence. Too bad, then, that *Bachman*, which received its world premiere at Toronto's Hot Docs festival, otherwise fails to provide much insight into its subject.

A large majority of baby boomers grew up listening to Bachman's music thanks to his 1960s and '70s work in The Guess Who and Bachman-Turner Overdrive. He's one of the rare musicians to have No. 1 singles representing two different bands, and his many hits include "American Woman," "These Eyes," "No Time," "Undun," "Laughing," "Takin' Care of Business," "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet," "Let It Ride" and "Roll On Down the Highway." The list inevitably conjures up fond memories of AM radio heard over tinny car speakers during a summer drive.

The documentary delivers a loving portrait of its subject, who is still going strong in his 70s as a solo artist (a large section of the film is devoted to the creation of his latest project, a recently

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released album featuring the songs of George Harrison) and currently hosts a popular music-oriented radio show on the CBC, *Vinyl Tap*.

The film dutifully chronicles Bachman's life in chronological fashion, beginning with his modest upbringing in Winnipeg. Discovering his love of the guitar at an early age, he hooked up with popular local singer-songwriter Chad Allan, joining his band Chad Allan and the Expressions. The group eventually morphed into The Guess Who, with Allan out and Burton Cummings, with whom Bachman formed a hugely successful songwriting partnership, in.

From the beginning, Bachman was an anomaly as a rock star, rejecting the common lifestyle of booze, drugs and sex and converting to Mormonism after he met the woman who would become his first wife. His stern sense of morality led to tensions with his fellow players, who eventually kicked him out of the band. Neil Young, interviewed in the film, expresses the indignation he still feels over the decision. "The whole thing was Randy," Young says of The Guess Who. Young also says that Bachman "was the biggest influence on me."

Bachman reunited with Allan to form Brave Belt, but the country-folk project, heavily influenced by such bands as Poco and Buffalo Springfield, proved unsuccessful and short-lived. Not long after, Bachman was persuaded to listen to a singer named Fred Turner at a local bar. Not wanting to venture inside an establishment that sold alcohol, Bachman listened to Turner's powerful rendition of "House of the Rising Sun" from an open door. Their resulting collaboration, BTO, became a global phenomenon that brought Bachman enough riches to build a mega-mansion in rural Washington. But that band, too, eventually fell apart due to faltering record sales and interpersonal tensions.

There's certainly enough juicy material in Bachman's life to fuel a documentary, but this disappointing effort never succeeds in getting below the surface. We hear from such musicians as Young, Peter Frampton and Paul Shaffer, who offer mostly bromides. Turner delivers more personal commentary, but Cummings, so important in Bachman's career, is conspicuous by his absence.

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Two of Bachman's children weigh in, but very little about their father's personal life is revealed. And while Bachman himself is interviewed extensively, he doesn't open up about his marriages, his conflicts with other bandmembers, the way he dealt with massive success and then financial ruin, his health problems, the inspirations behind his songs or pretty much anything else of substance. Bachman's love of music comes through again and again; he seems physically incomplete without a guitar in his hands. But lacking the depth that would have made the film interesting to anyone other than its subject's ardent fans, *Bachman* mainly comes across like an unrevealing *Behind the Music* episode.

Production company: Farpoint Films

Director-screenwriter: John Barnard

Producers: Gilles Paquin, Kyle Bornais, Chris Charney, Scott Leary

Director of photography: Markus Henkel

Editors: Markus Henkel, John Barnard

Venue: Hot Docs

80 minutes

'The Trolley': Film Review | Hot Docs 2018

2:43 PM PDT 5/14/2018 by Frank Scheck



Courtesy of Hot Docs

Stephen Low's Imax documentary chronicles the history of the revolutionary mode of transportation.

The Hot Docs world-premiere screening of Stephen Low's documentary *The Trolley* definitely had its sentimental aspects. It was the festival's inaugural presentation of an Imax film, shown at the Ontario Place Cinesphere, a venue built in 1971 as the world's first permanent Imax theater. The director is the son of Colin Low, the inventor of the format, and he himself has extensive Imax credits, including such noteworthy efforts as *Titanica* and *Across the Sea of Time*. Adding to its attraction at this festival, the film celebrates an increasingly rare mode of transportation that is still going strong in Toronto. Despite all this serendipity, however, *The Trolley* proves a major disappointment, coming across more like a promotional industrial film than an objective documentary.

The film chronicles the humble streetcar's history, from its horse-powered version developed in the late 1800s to the electrical models still in use today. Its soundtrack features, what else, "The Trolley Song," and the florid narration written by Low informs us that the pioneering electric trolley system, designed by Frank J. Sprague and first used in Richmond, Virginia, rescued urban landscapes from the "mountains of manure" produced by animals; that it provided energy-efficient transportation at low cost to the masses in egalitarian fashion; and that it promoted a "philosophy of sharing" that spread to cities across the world. Throughout, the tone is one usually reserved for saints and prophets.

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Alas, the wonders of these marvelous systems of transportation weren't sufficiently appreciated, as the opening shot of a "trolley cemetery" reminds us. "They paid the ultimate price," the narrator somberly intones as we see images of decrepit trolley cars that were consigned to oblivion. This was the result of an evil cabal of car manufacturers and oil producers conspiring against trolleys in favor of gas-guzzling automobiles, or "motor monkeys." Those people resistant to driving were forced into subways, referred to here as "tunnels of perpetual blackness."

Thankfully, despite all the dystopia on display, the doc assures us there is light at the ends of those tunnels. Under the eco-friendly appellation "light rail," trolleys have been making a comeback in recent years. And why shouldn't they, since they are "one device perfectly suited to save the world" from the life-killing effects of pollution. Like "a new generation of warriors," trolley lines are conquering the streets of cities around the world.

No doubt the film has noble intentions, but its absurdly over-the-top, practically fetishistic approach undermines its very aims. And despite the frequently gorgeous visuals of urban landscapes dotted with sleek new streetcars (Toronto itself recently unveiled the latest iteration of its fabled Red Rocket fleet), the subject matter doesn't particularly lend itself to the big-screen format. Grainy, archival B&W footage, after all, doesn't benefit from being blown up to massive proportions.

The Trolley fulfills its educational aspirations with its concise recounting of the history of a form of urban transportation that even its most frequent riders probably don't think about all that much. Kids will probably adore it, and maybe that was the point. But more mature, sober-minded viewers may feel besieged by its non-stop hagiography.

Production company: The Stephen Low Company

Director-screenwriter: Stephen Low

Producers: Pietro L. Serapiglia, Stephen Low

Executive producer: Paul Globus

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Director of photography: Tristan Breeuwer

Editor: James Lahti

Composers: Beach House, Bruno Coulais

Venue: Hot Docs

45 minutes

'My Generation': Film Review | Hot Docs 2018

9:20 AM PDT 5/15/2018 by Frank Scheck



Cabin Creek Films/Photofest

Barbara Kopple's rarely seen documentary compares and contrasts the three Woodstock music festivals that took place in 1969, 1994 and 1999.

Attendees of this year's Hot Docs received a special treat in the form of a surprise screening of Barbara Kopple's *My Generation*, about the three Woodstock music festivals that took place in 1969, 1994 and 1999. The film premiered as a work-in-progress at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival and, the occasional festival screening and television broadcast aside, has barely been seen since. Its original financial backer, PolyGram, withdrew its funding, and the music licensing rights were so costly that the filmmaker was unable to release it on her own. This rare presentation thus became a welcome opportunity for documentary buffs to finally see this excellent film which deserves wider exposure.

The film, co-directed by Thomas Haneke, largely concentrates on the '94 edition, noting the many differences between it and its less commercially oriented forebear. Backed by the PolyGram corporation, it was again co-produced by Michael Lang, who muses about his new venture, "I'd like to see what people make of it."

The festival wasn't exactly warmly embraced by the residents of Saugerties, N.Y., the proposed site. Footage of a town meeting about the event shows attendees voicing their fears about being raped or stabbed by festivalgoers and vowing to arm themselves.

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What becomes very clear is the massive commercialization attendant to the '94 edition, from Pepsi signing on as a principal sponsor to the licensing of products ranging from dog tags to condoms. We see marketing meetings regarding such other corporate tie-ins as Continental Airlines and Haagen-Dazs, the latter designated "the official ice cream of Woodstock." "Ben & Jerry's were jerks," one of the execs complains.

Like the '69 original, the event quickly became a giant mud bath due to torrential rains, but that didn't inhibit the enthusiasm of its young attendees who were intent on having a good time. Many, however, were less than thrilled about being compared to the hippie generation that made the first event such a cultural event. "I'm tired of hearing about the '60s," one young man complains, while another points out, "The Woodstock generation are all yuppies now."

The documentary includes snippets of many of the '94 musical performances by such acts as Blues Traveler, Cypress Hill, Green Day, Metallica, Nine Inch Nails, Santana, the Red Hot Chili Peppers and others. Footage of Joe Cocker's 1969 performance (shown, as are all of the scenes from the '69 festival, in black and white) is contrasted with his appearance 25 years later. There are also amusing interviews with several of the performers, such as Perry Farrell, who says disdainfully about the event, "I just smell too much money" as we see an intertitle informing us that his band, Porno for Pyros, demanded \$150,000 for their participation. Henry Rollins comments, "I'm 33 years old, I would never go to a concert like this...I'm staying at the Marriott."

Despite the promoters' claims that Woodstock '94, which was widely shown on PPV, was not profitable, a 30th anniversary event was quickly planned. It turned out to be something of a debacle. The festival was held at an abandoned air force base, with the pavement and lack of shade making the heat unbearable. Female attendees endured much sexual harassment, as did performers like Sheryl Crow, who lashed back at audience members shouting at her to take off her top. The lineup, which included acts like Limp Bizkit and DMX, was less than stellar, and patrons, disgruntled by the lack of amenities and high prices for food and water, eventually resorted to vandalism and setting fires.

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Kopple and co-director/editor Haneke superbly distill what must have been massive amounts of raw footage, cannily drawing connections between the three festivals that emphasize both their differences and commonalities. The 1969 edition, for instance, wasn't the utopian ideal that has become common mythology and, as the interviews with the attendees of the '94 and '99 festivals make clear, many festivalgoers had just as good time at those editions as their predecessors did.

My Generation makes insightful points about, among other things, the power and limitations of nostalgia, the differences between generations of young people and the corporatization of popular music. It makes one eager to see what the filmmaker could do with the 50th-anniversary Woodstock festival already being planned for next year.

Production: Cabin Creek Films, Mikado Film, PolyGram Diversified Entertainment, Road Movies Filmproduktion, Schulberg Productions, Solaris

Directors: Barbara Kopple, Thomas Haneke

Screenwriters: Barbara Kopple, Ali MacLean

Producer: Barbara Kopple

Executive producers: Allen Newman, Jeff Rowland

Director of photography: Tom Hurwitz

Editor: Thomas Haneke

Venue: Hot Docs

103 minutes

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/my-generation-1111975>

'The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution': Film Review | Hot Docs 2018

11:20 AM PDT 5/15/2018 by Frank Scheck



Courtesy of Hot Docs Festival

Maya Gallus' documentary profiles seven female chefs facing daunting professional obstacles.

Chefs are treated like the culinary equivalent of rock stars in today's pop culture. And like rock stars, too many of them are male. Maya Gallus' documentary puts a much-needed spotlight on a gallery of female chefs attempting to rise to the top of an industry that has been dominated by men for far too long. Chronicling the personal and professional struggles faced by these women working under often toxic conditions, *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution* served as a timely opening-night offering of Toronto's Hot Docs festival even if it didn't always live up to its thematic aspirations.

The Canadian filmmaker, who previously dealt with the outside staff of restaurants in her 2010 documentary *Dish: Women, Waitressing & the Art of Service*, here profiles seven notable female chefs working in New York City, London and Toronto. Each of them describes the difficulties of attempting to crack the "boys' club" that is the restaurant industry, one in which male chefs are glorified for being obnoxious (Gordon Ramsay being the prime example) and women chefs fall under the heading of "difficult." More importantly, female chefs face much greater obstacles when it comes to procuring the funding necessary to open a quality restaurant.

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Suzanne Barr exemplifies the travails often faced by women in the industry. She's seen running her cozy Toronto restaurant Saturday Dinette while simultaneously raising her young son, who spends as much time there as he does at home. Despite her restaurant's success, Barr is forced to close it and open an even smaller one after experiencing problems with her landlord.

Several of the women relate stories of harassment in the kitchen, including Ivy Knight, who describes being viciously attacked by the male chef for whom she was working. When she reported the matter to their bosses, they told her to "suck it up." On the other hand, chef Charlotte Langley says that she fell into similar patterns of abusive behavior when she took charge of a kitchen, taking pleasure from the "harem" of younger men working for her. "I realized I'm also part of the problem," she admits.

The women often take pride in running kitchens marked by calm and quiet, unlike many male chefs who thrive on bullying and yelling at their employees. French chef Anne-Sophie Pic acknowledges the maternal aspects of her approach. "A restaurant is a way to show people that we love them," she comments.

The film also features more unconventional subjects, such as one freelance cook who lacks the financial means to open her own restaurant and operates a series of highly popular "pop-up meals" at people's homes instead.

Much like restaurant-goers, viewers may have reservations about *The Heat: A Kitchen (R)evolution*. The film suffers from a lack of focus, with Gallus flitting from subject to subject and not handling her themes in sufficiently cohesive manner. As a result, the whole feels like less than the sum of its parts, resembling a series of appetizers instead of a main dish. But it offers many valuable insights along the way and will certainly appeal to foodies with its extensive depictions of beautifully prepared meals that will inevitably leave viewers salivating. The doc doesn't really delve deeply enough into its important subject, but it does have the advantage of being the first out of the gate.

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Production company: Red Queen Productions

Director-screenwriter: Maya Gallus

Producers: Maya Gallus, Howard Fraiberg

Director of photography: John Tran

Editor: David Kazala

Composer: Keir Brownstone

Venue: Hot Docs

75 minutes

Breaking the silence: Hot Docs 2018 addresses the #MeToo moment

Toronto's international documentary festival moved swiftly to showcase a series of films that reckon with our moment of sexual-relations redress – begging the question of when a political platform becomes an artistic prison, and answering with a vision of creative nonfiction as a space to transcend victimhood.

Simran Hans

17 May 2018



Laura Bari's Primas

#MeToo, #TimesUp, 'The Reckoning' – the wave of discussion and hopeful action in the wake of the allegations about Harvey Weinstein's sexual misconduct has been referred to as a movement, and one that's causing ripples of change across Hollywood and the film industry. Yet perhaps it would be more accurate to call this a moment – a disruption in the form of an emotional electric shock that has forced both the people who make films and the people who screen them to listen to women.

However you prefer to categorise it, Hot Docs, the Toronto-based documentary film festival, has responded swiftly, programming a timely themed strand of films titled Silence Breakers just seven months after the New York Times broke the Weinstein story in October 2017. The slate included ten feature-length films and seven shorts, all directed by women, about "women speaking up and being heard". A promising and substantial-seeming commitment to centring female filmmakers and their stories, surely, supported by the rest of this year's festival line-up, 50 percent of which were directed or co-directed by women.

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Still, there's a tightrope-fine balance between proactively taking responsibility and performative political posturing that might boost a festival's cultural relevance – this one wobbling a little with the presence of an Oxfam-branded rape whistle in my festival tote bag, and the 'comfort counsellors' on hand at each Silence Breakers screening.

The trailer for HotDocs' Silence Breakers programme

Of those screenings, highlights included Argentinian director Laura Bari's **Primas**, about her two teenage nieces and their childhood traumas. Bari lets her protagonists handle the narration, ensuring that their stories are always told in their own words.

The film's striking centrepiece is an unembellished medium-shot of the pair sat together, the camera still as each girl explains what happened to her as the other listens – a radical act of holding space for each prima (cousin). Fifteen-year-old Rocío was “raped, burnt, left for dead” at the age of nine, Aldana sexually and emotionally abused by her father as a child. The film moves between scenes like this, affecting in their blunt simplicity, and more expressionistic visuals, like a slumbering seal half-buried in sand and twinned with an image of Rocío, similarly submerged, or later, a haptic close-up of Rocío's reconstructed legs, her hands running over the mottled skin graft as she discusses the surgery. Bari's lyrical camera newly renders her scarred flesh a site of sensuality, not shame.

Primas trailer

Nancy Schwartzman's **Roll Red Roll** spear-tackles the perpetrators of sexual abuse, rather than the victims. A glossy, pace-y true crime thriller about the 2012 gang rape of an underage girl by the star players of a high school football team in Steubenville, Ohio, it opens on the image of a full moon, overlaid with chilling audio clipped from a viral video of the incident. “She is so raped right now!” cackles a teenage boy's voice, describing the inebriated ‘Jane Doe’ (whose identity is not disclosed, and who does not appear in the film).

It was local blogger Alexandria Goddard who brought the story to media attention, tracking the football players' individual social media posts and piecing together what happened that night with screen caps of self-incriminating, time-stamped evidence. Schwartzman neatly synthesizes this on screen, combining material from text messages, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube with CCTV-style footage of Detective J.P. Rigaud formally interrogating the students and football coach (who didn't suspend the boys “because it would make them look guilty”). It's an incisive, hot-blooded look at small-town sexism, and the practical measures taken to protect those who already hold power.

Roll Red Roll trailer

I was also taken by Irene Lusztig's **Yours in Sisterhood**, which sees a series of American women read aloud a series of unpublished letters sent to Ms. Magazine in the 1970s, and then respond to them, literally re-animating buried (or rather, silenced) histories. Deceptively knotty and more alive with unresolved conflict than its straightforward set-up suggests, Lusztig speaks to a range of women (and one trans man), not all of who comfortably relate to what they are reading. The letters cover sexual abuse, workplace discrimination, body dysmorphia and other 'women's issues' but what's striking is how each 'performance' seems to draw out a moment of transformation and awakening for the person reading.

Yours in Sisterhood trailer

Billed as a special presentation, rather than as an official part of the Silence Breakers selection was the late addition (and world premiere) of **The Reckoning: Hollywood's Worst Kept Secret**, about the Weinstein scandal, and directed by Canadian filmmaker Barry Avrich.

Televisual in style and execution, it provides a comprehensive, if hastily sketched, overview of the current media landscape, recapping scandals involving James Toback, Woody Allen, Louis C.K. and Aziz Ansari, as well as Weinstein himself. The film is predictably slippery with regard to separating the art from the artist, a question the film poses with no intention of answering meaningfully, though a well-placed montage of movie clips (including [this one from 1994's Dumb and Dumber](#)) cleverly sum up the way Hollywood teaches men not to take 'no' as an answer.

Aldrich also directed the 2011 documentary *Unauthorized: The Harvey Weinstein Project* (interesting too, that that film was narrated by Albert Schultz, a beloved Canadian actor and director who earlier this year was scandalously dismissed from [Soulpepper](#), the theatre company he co-founded after being accused of sexual misconduct by four actresses), which lionized the media mogul. If this new project is supposed to serve as a kind of corrective, its self-serving ambitions are transparent. With this context, the inclusion of *The Reckoning* throws into relief the contradictions that can occur when films are evaluated on a message-first basis.

In the Silence Breakers shorts programme, two films that were not envisaged by their directors as #MeToo response pieces caught my eye. The first, Sophy Romvari's **Pumpkin Movie**, plays out as an unscripted Skype conversation about everyday sexism between two friends – Romvari, in her Vancouver apartment, and Leah Collins Lipsette, on a laptop screen in Halifax on Halloween, as each carves a Jack O' Lantern.

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More creative nonfiction than traditional documentary, the anecdotes they share are revealed in the film's credits to have been compiled from a series of real-life incidents experienced by a range of women, but whether the two are spitballing about patronising landlords, street harassment or bad dates ("He said that women shouldn't burp in front of men... And that if they do, they should 'apologise and giggle'") there's a palpable veracity – and a blunt comedy – to the spooky stories being voiced. There's wit too, in the satisfying, audible slop of pumpkin guts as Romvari reaches her hand into the carcass and loudly empties its stinking flesh into a bucket with her bare hands, an embodied evisceration.

Infinite Galatea trailer

The experimental **Infinite Galatea** (co-directed by Julia Maura, Mariangela Pluchino, Ambra Reijnen, Maria Chatzi & Fatima Flores) also took a hybrid form, retelling the Greek myth of Pygmalion and his 'Galatea', the ivory statue of a woman he carved and fell in love with. The film's sardonic voiceover circumvents the story's happy ending (in which Galatea comes to life and loves him in return), choosing instead to focus on the brutal fashioning of this woman's body, by (and thus for) a man.

The film opens with the sound of rhythmic panting as we swipe through sex dolls on Tinder, the frame in portrait like an iPhone screen, before a jump cut matches the noises to a clip of air being sucked from a blow-up sex doll, her deflating, vinyl body crumpling in on itself until only the hard, shiny mask of her face remains. Anatomical drawings of women's bodies are mixed with black and white archive footage of train doors being forced open; a small, distressed monkey mid-science experiment; Victorian era images of a nude woman, trussed up on a hospital bed; and later, a modern-day factory where high-end silicone love dolls are built. The cumulative effect is visceral, linking the ethical conundrums that plague Galatea, Frankenstein, and the sex toy industry, and gifting a voice to female bodies designed not to talk back.

Bing Liu's Sundance Jury Prize-winning **Minding the Gap** didn't screen as part of the Silence Breakers programme but could've easily slotted in, suggesting perhaps that male filmmakers aren't subject to the same limits as their female colleagues. A deeply personal film about a trio of skateboarders growing up in the economically depressed suburb of Rockford, Illinois, the film is as much about challenging toxic masculinity and rewriting inherited patterns of gendered domestic abuse as it is a tale of three boyhood comrades and their newly forged chosen families. In a Silence Breakers panel discussion, Laura Bari explained that what victims of abuse and trauma experience is "not anger" but "comprehension". In other words, progress – however painful – is about active participation, not passive rage.

Minding the Gap trailer

As Hot Docs have cannily highlighted, documentaries might be uniquely equipped to explore this theme – of ‘silence breaking’ or whistleblowing about matters otherwise unsafe for women to voice. Firstly, in that enough ‘factual’ stories about the abuse of women already exist untold in the world, and secondly in the form’s hybrid possibilities. Beyond the flat rendering of ‘documentary’ as journalistic ‘document’, nonfiction filmmaking might be a creative space where ‘real’ trauma might be reframed, and ‘real’ empathy produced.