

HOT DOCS 2024 WORLD SHOWCASE PROGRAM PRESENTS A DIVERSITY OF COMPELLING GLOBAL STORIES FROM 22 COUNTRIES

Toronto, March 26, 2024 – Hot Docs will present a rich tapestry of compelling stories from around the world as part of the Festival’s **World Showcase** program—featuring 15 features, 1 mid-length, and 1 short from 25 countries, including Afghanistan, Belgium, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chile, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Qatar, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, UK, USA and Venezuela. The 2024 Hot Docs Festival will take place April 25 to May 5 in Toronto.

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

International premieres include ***Sweeties***, following three young teenage girls as they face the complexities of romance, family relations and online obsessions while on holiday at a French campsite; ***The White Mountain***, in which two climbers brave the deadly peaks of the highest mountain in the Alps before climate change melts their dreams away; and ***Rouge***, exploring the journey of young men in River Rouge, birthplace of one of America’s most storied basketball legacies, and one of the country’s most economically and environmentally challenged zip codes.

North American premieres include ***The New Man***, capturing the poignant solitude of an inhabitant in an abandoned village on Cape Verde, grappling with the prospect of leaving his only home; ***Smiling Georgia***, exposing the fallout of a presidential campaign promise gone awry, as eager dentists prematurely extract teeth in anticipation of funded dental care, leaving swathes of toothless Georgians questioning the absurdity of political vows when the election is lost; ***Silent Trees***, offering a bold exploration of the global refugee crisis through a partially animated lens, delving into its impact at the heart of Europe; ***Life is Beautiful***, following a young Palestinian filmmaker exiled in remote northern Norway, offering a poignant portrayal of a life interrupted by international politics; ***The Wasp and the Orchid***, juxtaposing the promise of a romantic life in Paris—sold on screen to rural Tunisian youth via the introduction of television in the ‘90s—with the harsh realities they face upon arrival; ***Rising Up at Night***, portraying a population reinventing itself in the face of uncertainty after the election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo leaves capital city Kinshasa in darkness; and ***Marching in the Dark***, following a young widow who finds solace and strength among resilient women who have also lost their partners to the rise in farmer suicides in India.

Canadian premieres include ***Agent of Happiness***, chronicling agents who travel across Bhutan in order to connect with people face-to-face and understand their feeling; ***So This Is Christmas***—captured on 35mm by master storyteller Ken Wardrop—delving into the sadness and crushing expectations the holiday creates for residents of a small Irish town; and ***Billy & Molly: An Otter Love Story***, a heart-warming story of the love between a wild otter and a man set in the remote Scottish islands of Shetland.

The full lineup of 2024 World Showcase films appear below with screening information. In many cases, filmmakers will be in attendance for post-screening discussions. For more information on the program please visit www.hotdocs.ca/whats-on.

AGENT OF HAPPINESS

D: Arun Bhattarai, Dorottya Zurbó | P: Noémi Veronika Szakonyi, Máté Artur Vincze, Arun Bhattarai | Bhutan, Hungary | 2024 | 90 min | Canadian Premiere

How can happiness be measured? In Bhutan, agents travel door to door, meeting people face to face to understand their feelings. In the process, we encounter revealing, poignant and life-affirming moments on what really matters in life.

Friday, April 26, 1:15 PM - SCOTIA 7

Saturday, April 27, 10:00 AM - TLB1

BILLY & MOLLY: AN OTTER LOVE STORY

D: Charlie Hamilton James | P: Jeff Wilson | UK | 2023 | 77 min | Canadian Premiere

When a wild otter in desperate need of help washes up on their jetty in Shetland, Billy, his wife and their devoted sheepdog accept a unique new member into their family. Together, they explore how the ability to love reawakens us to nature's beauty.

Tuesday, April 30, 11:15 AM - TLB2

Saturday, May 4, 2:15 PM - TLB1

BREAKING THE CYCLE

D: Aekaphong Saransate, Thanakrit Duangmaneepon | P: Tanwarat Sombatwattana, Komtouch Napattaloong | Thailand | 2024 | 117 min | World Premiere

A group of young politicians campaigning against an authoritarian constitution speak up, spark hope and ignite a once-in-a-generation movement in this energetic exploration of the recent elections in Thailand.

Thursday, May 2, 5:00 PM - Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

Saturday, May 4, 4:45 PM - Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

HELEN AND THE BEAR

D: Alix Blair | P: Rebekah Fergusson, Lauren Kushner, Jenny Slattery, Alix Blair | USA | 2024 | 81 min | World Premiere

Helen was a rebellious young hippie when she met and married U.S. Congressman Pete McCloskey, a Republican star known for opposing his own party. Forty years later, anticipating Pete's death, she reflects on marriage, sex and the astounding complexity of true love.

Sunday, April 28, 4:30 PM - SCOTIA 6
Tuesday, April 30, 11:45 AM - SCOTIA 5

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

D: Mohamed Jabaly | P: Kristine Ann Skaret, Sarah Winge-Sørensen | Norway, Qatar, Palestine | 2023 | 93 min | North American Premiere

A young Palestinian filmmaker exiled in remote northern Norway documents a life thrown into limbo by international politics. Using creativity, and a little help from his friends, he fights to access basic human rights and forge a way forward.

Tuesday, April 30, 10:00 AM - SCOTIA 6
Thursday, May 2, 8:00 PM - TLB2

MARCHING IN THE DARK

D: Kinshuk Surjan | P: Evelien De Graef, Hanne Phlypo, Digna Sinke, Arya Rothe | Belgium, India, Netherlands | 2024 | 105 min | North American Premiere

Amidst rising farmer suicides in India, a young widow finds solace and strength among resilient women who share the same loss. Through peer sessions, she conquers her grief, challenges taboos and pursues independence and a better future for her and her children.

Tuesday, April 30, 1:15 PM - SCOTIA 6
Friday, May 3, 10:30 AM - TLB2

THE NEW MAN

D: Carlos Yuri Ceuninck | P: Aurélien Bodinaux, Natasha Craveiro, Paulo de Carvalho, Gudula Meinzolt, Alyaa Musa | Cape Verde, Belgium, Germany, Sudan | 2023 | 64 min | North American Premiere

In an abandoned village on Cape Verde, one man remains amidst the spectre of tragedy, steadfast in his solitude. As his own mortality descends, he must consider leaving the only home he has ever known.

SCREENING WITH

THE BROKEN GODDESS

D: Ximena Pereira | Chile, Venezuela | 21 min

Friday, May 3, 1:30 PM - SCOTIA 7
Sunday, May 5, 11:00 AM - SCOTIA 6

RISING UP AT NIGHT

D: Nelson Makengo | P: Dada Kahindo Siku, Rosa Spaliviero | Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium, Germany, Burkina Faso, Qatar | 2024 | 95 min | North American Premiere

After an election in the Democratic Republic of the Congo shakes its political and economic stability, its capital, Kinshasa, remains in darkness. This immersive, cinematic depiction of life in spite of everything portrays a population reinventing itself in the face of uncertainty.

Thursday, May 2, 8:15 PM - TLB3

Saturday, May 4, 8:00 PM - TLB1

ROUGE

D: Hamoody Jaafar | P: Razi Jafri | USA | 2024 | 90 min | International Premiere

Young men in River Rouge, home to one of America's richest basketball legacies, come of age while navigating their high-stakes role as student athletes in one of the country's most economically and environmentally challenged zip codes.

Sunday, April 28, 8:15 PM - TLB2

Tuesday, April 30, 5:30 PM - TLB3

SILENT TREES

D: Agnieszka Zwiefka | P: Zofia Kujawska, Agnieszka Zwiefka, Heino Deckert | Poland, Germany, Denmark | 2024 | 84 min | North American Premiere

In this intimate, partially animated and daring trip into the global refugee crisis at the heart of Europe, a 16-year-old Kurdish girl must become a mother to her four younger brothers after their mother's death at the Polish-Belarusian border.

Wednesday, May 1, 11:45 AM - TLB3

Sunday, May 5, 5:00 PM - TLB1

THE SHARP EDGE OF PEACE

D: Roya Sadat | P: Leslie Thomas, Ana Ramic, Christy Denes, J. Matthew Jacob, Aziz Deldar, Alka Sadat | Afghanistan, Qatar, USA, Belgium | 2024 | 95 min | World Premiere

Sitting at the negotiating table with the Taliban, four extraordinary women navigate the harsh reality of Afghanistan's new chapter and the political impact on women's rights, proving their unyielding commitment to the people of their country.

Saturday, April 27, 1:00 PM - SCOTIA 7

Sunday, April 28, 11:00 AM - TLB3

SMILING GEORGIA

D: Luka Beradze | P: Nino Chichua, Anna Khazaradze, Eva Blondiau | Georgia, Germany | 2023 | 62 min | North American Premiere

On the campaign trail, Georgia's president vows to fund dental care and eager dentists start pulling out people's teeth in anticipation. Hordes of toothless Georgians are left pondering the absurdity of politicians' promises when he loses the election.

Friday, May 3, 2:15 PM - SCOTIA 6

Saturday, May 4, 10:30 AM - Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS

D: Ken Wardrop | P: Samantha Corr, Andrew Freedman | Ireland | 2023 | 86 min | Canadian Premiere
Is Christmas really the most magical time of the year? Shot on glorious 35mm, master storyteller Ken Wardrop captures the sadness and crushing expectations the holiday creates for residents of a small Irish town. 'Tis the season with Irish heartache and humour.

Tuesday, April 30, 8:15 PM - TLB3

Thursday, May 2, 4:45 PM - SCOTIA 7

SWEETIES

D: Anneke de Lind van Wijngaarden, Natalie Bruijns | P: Iris Lammertsma, Boudewijn Koole | Netherlands, Belgium | 2024 | 80 min | International Premiere
While on holiday at a French campsite, three young teenage girls face romance, family relations and online obsessions in this poignant look at coming of age in a digital world.

Thursday, May 2, 5:15 PM - SCOTIA 6

Sunday, May 5, 10:00 AM - Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema

THE WASP AND THE ORCHID

D: Saber Zammouri | P: Chawki Knis, Thomas Schmitt | Tunisia, France | 2023 | 65 min | North American Premiere

When television was introduced to rural Tunisia in the '90s it replaced storytelling around the campfire and inspired a legion of young people to emigrate to Paris where their everyday reality collided with the romantic image sold to them on screen.

Thursday, May 2, 2:30 PM - SCOTIA 6

Saturday, May 4, 12:00 PM - TLB3

THE WHITE MOUNTAIN

D: Luke Wiles, Gwyn Williams | P: Malcolm Wood | France | 2023 | 89 min | International Premiere
High atop Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in the Alps, two individuals brave the deadly peaks and trails to pursue their personal conquests before the slopes melt away, confronting climate change and our role in its prevention.

Sunday, April 28, 6:45 PM - SCOTIA 7

Tuesday, April 30, 8:00 PM - TLB2

###

[Hot Docs \(www.hotdocs.ca\)](http://www.hotdocs.ca), North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Hot Docs will present its 31st annual edition from April 25 to May 5, 2024, in cinemas across Toronto. Hot Docs will also mount a dynamic series of knowledge sessions, networking opportunities and market programs for documentary practitioners and industry delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum and Hot Docs Deal Maker. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar film fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and programs the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood and the world's first and largest documentary cinema.

Starting Tuesday, March 26, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, April 2, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and/or redeemed [online](http://www.hotdocs.ca) at www.hotdocs.ca or in person at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Box Office, located at 506 Bloor Street West (hours vary daily in accordance with cinema screenings). Single tickets are \$20 to regular Festival screenings and \$23 to Special Presentations screenings (\$18-\$20 members). Special events vary in price. A Festival 12-Pack is \$209 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$299. Hot Docs offers free tickets for all screenings before 5:00 p.m. to seniors and students with valid photo I.D., available online the day of the screening, subject to availability. Free screenings for students courtesy of CBC and CBC Gem.

Hot Docs is proud to include Scotia Wealth Management as its Presenting Platinum Partner; Rogers as its Founding Partner; CBC as its Signature Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the Canada Media Fund as its Major Supporters.

FILM STILLS AVAILABLE

Media Download Site: <https://downloads.hotdocs.ca/downloads>
Password: media2024

Media Contact:

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