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HOT DOCS TO COMMISSION EIGHT SHORT DOCUMENTARIES FROM CANADIAN FILMMAKERS FOR SECOND SEASON OF *CITIZEN MINUTES* PROJECT

Toronto, ON – Hot Docs is pleased to announce a second season of Citizen Minutes, a documentary initiative to inspire interest and engagement in Canadian democracy and public affairs. The project will commission eight short docs from filmmakers across the country that highlight bold and unlikely ordinary Canadians doing extraordinary things to make their communities better places. From an open call for submissions, an internal committee will select eight projects to be produced by Hot Docs, which will premiere at the 2023 Hot Docs Festival. The Citizen Minutes project is made possible through support by The Rossy Foundation.

Citizen Minutes will also feature an educational component, with Hot Docs developing complementary resources linked to curricula to enable educators to use the films as teaching tools. Hot Docs is therefore particularly interested in applications that offer stories that spotlight youth-led civic engagement.

"After a challenging year and a rise in unproductive civic discourse, this new set of films will serve up some unique reminders that civic engagement is happening all around us," says **April Hazan**, Managing Director, Hot Docs. "Examples of real issues and real solutions give us all inspiration to become active in the solutions we hope our communities will benefit from. Documentary is a welcome way to introduce seeds of change in our communities, through stories that inspire action."

"Hot Docs is honoured to continue this impactful project," says **Elizabeth Radshaw**, Director, Industry Programs, Hot Docs. "Not only does the Citizen Minutes collection of films celebrate civic engagement across Canada, it also offers a platform for Canadian storytellers to tell those stories."

The initial season of Citizen Minutes premiered eight short docs at the 2021 Hot Docs Festival before screening at over 30 Canadian and international festivals and being broadcast on Crave. A number of these projects became award-winners after release: *The Gift* (D: Rachel Garrick | 3 min | Canada) won People's Choice at the Vox Popular Film & Media Arts Festival and *Excluded by Design* (D: Simon Madore, Gabriel Tougas | 3 min | Canada) won Best Canadian Doc at the 300 Seconds Short Film Festival. Most recently, *Militant Mother* (D: Carmen Pollard | 8 min | Canada) was nominated for four Leo awards, including Best Short Documentary. Through the Docs For Schools program 33,745 Canadian students from 397 classes (representing 274 schools and 358 individual educators) engaged with the 2021 slate of films, with an additional Community Engagement Toolbox provided to help shape post-films conversations around the docs.

"We know from our experience with the first Citizen Minutes collection that documentary film is a powerful tool in bringing people together and creating space for civic engagement and meaningful public discourse," says **Sara Pedersen** of The Rossy Foundation. "The Rossy Foundation is pleased to be

supporting a second set of diverse filmmakers as they spotlight the work of some of Canada's citizen changemakers today."

Selected projects will range from two to eight minutes and will receive financial, production and post-production support, in addition to mentorship opportunities. Hot Docs aims to be more diverse and inclusive and encourages directors who are Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, and people of all ages, genders, sexual orientations and disabilities to apply. Applicants must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada. Applications will be evaluated based on feasibility, creative merit, audience, and fit with the mandate.

We at Hot Docs understand that civic engagement does not always mean moving the dial on global issues in a monumental way. Hot Docs is therefore interested in applications that spotlight stories about ordinary citizens working to achieve incremental change in their local communities.

Submissions open today and close on November 2 with final selections chosen in early December. To submit a film idea, please visit www.hotdocs.ca/citizenminutes for submission guidelines.

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About Hot Docs 30

Celebrating 30 years as North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, [Hot Docs](http://www.hotdocs.ca) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Since its inception in 1993, Hot Docs has supported the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production fund portfolio, including the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund, CrossCurrents Doc Funds, Hot Docs-Slaight Family Fund, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund and Hot Docs Partners, and valuable professional development programs, including Doc Ignite and Doc Accelerator. Hot Docs fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools 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.

About The Rossy Foundation

The Rossy Foundation is a Montreal-based private foundation that was established in 2004. Its mission is to contribute to civil society and to improve the lives of Canadians with a focus on cancer care, mental health, civic engagement, education and the arts. It is committed to supporting the vibrancy of Montreal and also funds charitable organizations across Canada and internationally within its areas of focus.

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PRESS RELEASE

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

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