

NEW CURIOUS MINDS AT HOT DOCS FESTIVAL EXPANDS ON FILM TOPICS WITH EXPERT-LED DISCUSSIONS AND VIRTUAL EVENTS

Toronto, ON, April 20, 2021 – Hot Docs is pleased to announce that it will present a spin off its immensely popular Curious Minds Speaker Series at this year’s Hot Docs Festival. Inspired by the year-round program of the same name, Curious Minds will dive deeper into the topics of five Official Selections in this year’s Festival lineup through engaging and thought-provoking discussions with subject experts, journalists and artists. Curious Minds conversations will be available to access for free on the Hot Docs website at hotdocs.ca during the Hot Docs Festival, April 29 to May 9.

“Curious Minds is such a hit with our knowledge-thirsty year-round audiences and members that we knew it would be a perfect addition to this year’s Festival,” said **Erin Lau**, managing director of Hot Docs. “We’re excited to extend these conversations to the Festival with the hopes of giving audiences the unique opportunity to engage with and learn more about the important subject matter of each film, and connect with its themes in a deeper and more personal way.”

Curious Minds programming includes:

SURVIVING THE PANDEMIC, ONE BOWL AT A TIME

Official Selection: *Come Back Anytime* (D: John Daschbach | P: Wataru Yamamoto | Japan | 2021 | 81 min | World Premiere)

In this conversation, we celebrate the tenacity of the restaurant industry during COVID-19 through the stories of a determined Toronto pastry chef and a Japan-based restaurant owner whose dreams of opening a Toronto ramen shop were almost thwarted by COVID-19.

Special guests: Aoi Yoshida and Shin Inaba, cross-global owners and chefs of Musoshin Ramen.

NOT YOUR VILLAIN: CREATING INCLUSIVITY IN THE ARTS

Official Selection: *Gallant Indies* (D: Philippe Béziat | P: Philippe Martin, David Thion | France | 2020 | 108 min | International Premiere)

An opera singer, a ballet dancer and an artistic director sit down to discuss the importance of diversifying content in the arts, and how arts organizations are, or should be, working towards creating more inclusive content. Using personal experiences in the field, they explore ever-present barriers, both visible and less visible, as well as ways to overcome them.

Panelists include: Tene Ward, Corps de Ballet dancer, National Ballet of Canada; Barbara Tomasic, Director of Artistic Programs, Gateway Theatre; and Asitha Tennekoon, opera singer and co-founder, Amplified Opera.

CRYPTOCURRENCY 101

Official Selection: *Dead Man’s Switch* (D: Sheona McDonald | P: Sheona McDonald | Canada | 2021 | 78 min | World Premiere)

Dive into the mysterious world of cryptocurrency as financial expert James Royal answers all our questions about NFTs, the blockchain and digital currencies. From the basics to more complicated elements like digital trading cards, audiences will find out why digital currency is so appealing, why its consequences can be detrimental, and what the future holds.

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

Led by James Royal, Senior Investing and Wealth Management Reporter at Bankrate and author of *The Zen of Thrift Conversions: How to Turn Hidden Bank Stocks into Big Gains*.

THE WAY WE WORK: UNPACKING THE GIG ECONOMY

Official Selection: *The Gig is Up* (D: Shannon Walsh | P: Ina Fichman, Luc Martin-Gousset | Canada, France | 2021 | 88 min | North American Premiere)

From food delivery to ridesharing, gig work is increasingly prevalent today, but what are the darker sides to the gig economy, and why do we see groups such as immigrants, refugees and young people engaged in this work at a higher rate than others? Gig economy experts Sara Mojtehdzadeh and Jennifer Scott will sit down with Ausma Malik of the Atkinson Foundation to discuss the merits and ramifications of this new era of work.

Moderated by Ausma Malik, the Director of Advocacy and Organizing at the Atkinson Foundation and host and producer of the *Just Work It* podcast.

Panelists include: Jennifer Scott, an app-based worker and president with Gig Workers United, and Sara Mojtehdzadeh, *Toronto Star* Work and Wealth reporter and host of the *Hustled* podcast.

COOKING & CONVERSATION WITH CHEF LUKE (AND FRIENDS)

Official Selection: *Until Further Notice* (D: Tiffany Hsiung | P: Priscilla Galvez, Tiffany Hsiung | Canada | 2021 | 28 min | Toronto Premiere)

In this one-of-a-kind live Curious Minds, Toronto's Chef Luke Donato and friends recreate the experience of food and community in an online cooking class and film Q&A combo that will allow audiences to interact with Chef Luke and guests while creating a tasty meal from scratch.

Led by filmmakers Tiffany Hsiung and Priscilla Galvez, and chef Luke Donato, former executive chef and owner of the French bistro Bacchanal.

Saturday, May 1 at 5:00PM

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[Hot Docs](#), 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 28th annual edition online from April 29-May 9, 2021, during which a full roster of industry conference sessions, market programs and networking events will be held for Canadian and international delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker, Distribution Rendezvous and The Doc Shop. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production 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, and operates Hot Docs at Home streaming platform.

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Hot Docs is proud to include Scotia Wealth Management as its Presenting Platinum Partner; Rogers Group of Funds as its Founding Partner; CBC Gem as its Signature Partner; Crave and Netflix as its Presenting Partners; and Telefilm Canada and the Government of Ontario as its Major Supporters.

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