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HOT DOCS AWARDS CAD 80,000 IN CASH AND PRIZES TO CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKERS

Toronto, ON— Hot Docs announced this morning the winning documentaries in this year’s official competition and the recipients of additional awards honouring Canadian and international filmmakers. The awards were revealed at the Hot Docs 2023 Awards Presentation at TIFF Bell Lightbox, hosted by arts journalist and co-founder of Media Girlfriends, Garvia Bailey. 15 awards in total were given out, including 11 awards for Festival films in competition – of which four were won by female filmmakers – and CAD 80,000 in cash and prizes were awarded. Playing on screens across Toronto, the 30th-anniversary Hot Docs Festival will close on Sunday, May 7. The Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian documentary will be announced on the last day of the Festival at a special encore screening at 7:00 pm at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. The top Canadian feature in the audience poll will receive a CAD 50,000 cash prize, courtesy of Rogers Group of Funds. The overall Audience Award winner will be announced after the Festival.

The Betty Youson Award for Best Canadian Short Documentary was presented to ***Last Respects*** (D: Megan Durnford | P: Megan Durnford | Canada | 2023), in which Montreal priest Abbé Claude Paradis creates a touching annual ceremony to celebrate the lives of the "unclaimed." The award includes a \$3,000 cash prize courtesy of John and Betty Youson. Jury statement: "For its human, simple and necessary approach to the universal theme of the dignity and value of every single life that stands out by virtue of its compelling, skilfully crafted visual language as much as its personal story and message."

The Best International Short Documentary Award was presented to ***Mrs. Iran’s Husband*** (D: Marjan Khosravi | P: Milad Khosravi | Iran | 2023), a pointed exploration of family and labour in Iran. The award includes a \$3,000 cash prize. Jury statement: "For its subtle intelligence and non-judgmental narrative. This honest family portrait allows us to approach a reality that deserves our attention now."

In the Best International Short Documentary Award category, the jury also acknowledged ***Dear Ani*** (D: Micah Levin | P: Micah Levin | USA | 2022) with an honourable mention.

Hot Docs is an Academy Award qualifying festival for short documentaries and, as winners of the Best International Short Documentary Award and the Betty Youson Award for Best Canadian Short Documentary Award respectively, ***Mrs. Iran’s Husband*** and ***Last Respects*** will qualify for consideration in the Documentary Short Subject category of the annual Academy Awards® without the standard theatrical run, provided they comply with Academy rules.

Veteran Canadian producer **Bonnie Thompson**, producer of *Echo of Everything* (D: Cam Christiansen | P: Bonnie Thompson | Canada | 2022), received the Don Haig Award, announced at the beginning of the Festival. The award is given to an outstanding independent Canadian producer with a film in the Festival in recognition of their creative vision, entrepreneurship and track record for nurturing emerging talent and comes with a \$5,000 cash prize, courtesy of the Don Haig Foundation.

The award for Best Mid-Length Documentary was presented to *Being in a Place – A Portrait of Margaret Tait* (D: Luke Fowler | P: Luke Fowler, Sarah Neely | UK | 2022), an experimental tribute to Scottish filmmaker Margaret Tait. Sponsored by British Pathé, the award includes a \$3,000 cash prize. Jury statement: “For its uniquely direct poetic sensibility to embody the spirit and work of an undercelebrated filmmaker and the way that the director moves us through its subject's visions by way of her archives and placing us behind her camera we chose ...”

In the Best Mid-Length Documentary category, the jury also acknowledged *Scala* (D: Ananta Thitanat | P: Abhichon Rattanabhayon, Nontawat Numbenchapol | Thailand | 2022) with an honourable mention.

The Lindalee Tracey Award, which honours an emerging Canadian filmmaker with a passionate point of view, a strong sense of social justice and a sense of humour, was presented to **Gaëlle Graton**. Graton will receive a \$5,000 cash prize courtesy of the Lindalee Tracey Fund, \$5,000 in post-production services from SIM, and a hand-blown glass sculpture by Andrew Kuntz, specially commissioned to honour Lindalee.

Award-winning Chinese American documentarian **Christine Choy** received the 2023 Outstanding Achievement Award. Choy’s seminal work was featured in the Outstanding Achievement Retrospective Program at this year’s Festival.

The Scotiabank Docs For Schools Student Choice Award went to *Invisible Beauty* (D: Bethann Hardison, Frédéric Tcheng | P: Lisa Cortés, Paul Dallas | USA | 2023 | 115 min | Canadian Premiere), pioneering Black model Bethann Hardison’s exploration of racial diversity in the fashion world. The award is given to the Festival film in the Docs For Schools education program that receives the highest rating as determined by a student poll and comes with a \$5,000 cash prize, courtesy of Scotiabank.

The Earl A. Glick Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award is given to a Canadian filmmaker whose film in competition is their first or second feature-length film. The award, which includes a \$3,000 cash prize courtesy of the Earl A. Glick Family, was presented to director **Dominique Chaumont** for *Veranada* (D: Dominique Chaumont | P: Dominique Chaumont | Canada, Argentina | 2022). Jury statement: “Life seems still in the Argentinian plains, but a man and his sheep give sense to a craft that seems destined to disappear. Beautiful images and a mesmerizing soundtrack make *Veranada* a truly authentic cinematographic experience, transporting you to a world you need to know.”

The new John Kastner Award went to *Silvicola* (D: Jean-Philippe Marquis | P: Jean-Philippe Marquis | Canada | 2023), exploring the human impact on forests through breathtaking vistas and poignant vignettes set in Canada’s Pacific Northwest. The Award presents \$5,000 to a Canadian Spectrum feature-

length documentary of courage and compassion that embodies masterful and audacious storytelling, meticulous observation, and a profound trust between the director and the people who share their stories. Jury statement: “Many films ask the question, how are we meant to exist upon a living being, our Earth. This is a masterwork of patience and complexity that doesn’t seek easy answers, and for that we lean in with humility and heartache. This is a film that holds questions we should all be asking ourselves.”

The new Bill Nemin Award for Best Social Impact Documentary, which recognizes the producers of a film in the Canadian Spectrum program that has the greatest potential to create social impact, went to **Matt King and Andrew Ferguson of *Someone Lives Here*** (D: Zack Russell | P: Matt King, Andrew Ferguson | Canada | 2022). The \$10,000 cash prize accompanying the award will help enable the winning film team to optimize the impact of the documentary through outreach and marketing activities. Jury statement: “Creating safe spaces against all odds, trying to fight humiliating circumstances, the carpenter constructs little safe heavens while authorities seem not to appreciate his efforts. This important and well-constructed film leaves us asking: how should we be living alongside each other?”

The DGC Special Jury Prize – Canadian Feature Documentary was presented to ***Caiti Blues*** (D: Justine Harbonnier | P: Nellie Carrier, Julie Paratian | Canada, France | 2023), in which an ex-New Yorker now living in a remote hippie town in New Mexico struggles to revive her dreams of singing on Broadway. Sponsored by the Directors Guild of Canada and DGC Ontario, the award includes a \$5,000 cash prize. Jury statement: “In a lonely universe, we travel through a world of imagination in search of identity. Music fractures and interweave in a film about struggling to become the person you dream of and are in search of. This is deeply engaging filmmaking.”

The Best Canadian Feature Documentary Award was presented to ***I Lost My Mom*** (D: Denys Desjardins | P: Denys Desjardins | Canada | 2022), an empathetic and intimate doc in which filmmaker Denys Desjardins captures his elderly mother’s experience of neglect in Quebec’s healthcare system. Supported by DOC and Telefilm Canada, the award includes a \$10,000 cash prize. Jury statement: “The filmmaker made something sublime out of limits. In a time of closures, he made a handmade work of art that opens empathy. This is a work of difficult love. This is deeply heartbreaking work.”

The Best International Feature Documentary Award was given to ***The Mountains*** (D: Christian Einshøj | P: Mathilde Hvid Lippmann | Denmark | 2023), which uses 75,000 photos and 30 years of home videos to weave a tender and humorous autobiographical portrait of the men in a Scandinavian family struck by devastating tragedy. The award includes a \$10,000 cash prize. Director **Christian Einshøj** was also the winner of The Emerging International Filmmaker Award, given to an international filmmaker whose film in competition is their first or second feature-length film. The award, supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation, includes a \$3,000 cash prize. Jury statement: “This unique, eloquent, and deeply honest look at a family told through various lenses was captivating. Christian Einshøj uses humour to tell a deeply personal story that anyone who is part of a family can relate to.”

In the Best International Feature Documentary category, the jury also acknowledged ***A Wolfpack Named Ernesto*** (D: Everardo González | P: Roberto Garza, Inna Payán, Jean-Christophe Simon | Mexico, France | 2023) with an honourable mention.

Hot Docs is an Academy Award qualifying festival for feature documentaries and, as the winner of the Best International Feature Documentary Award, ***The Mountains*** will qualify for consideration in the Best Documentary Feature category of the annual Academy Awards® without the standard theatrical run, provided they comply with Academy rules.

The Special Jury Prize – International Feature Documentary was given to ***Name Me Lawand*** (D: Edward Lovelace | P: Fleur Nieddu, Sam Arnold, Beyan Taher, Neil Andrews, Marisa Clifford | UK | 2022), in which a young deaf Kurdish boy joyfully hones his communication skills at a UK school after a treacherous journey from Iraq, only to later face deportation from his new home. Sponsored by A&E, the award includes a \$5,000 cash prize. Jury statement: “We were touched by this epic yet intimate story of a refugee family who had no choice but to leave their home to create a life for their deaf son.

The 2023 awards for films in competition were determined by four juries.

The Canadian Feature Documentary Jury:

Rodolfo Castillo-Morales (filmmaker, programmer, and curator), Shane Belcourt (filmmaker), Margje de Koning (filmmaker, educator, Artistic Director of Movies That Matter film festival).

The International Feature Documentary Jury:

Addie Morfoot (entertainment industry writer, head of editorial coverage for Variety), Ina Finchman (Oscar, BAFTA and Emmy nominated producer), Sudeep Sharma (programmer for the Sundance Film Festival).

The Mid-Length Documentary Jury:

Lina Rodriguez (filmmaker), Iris Ng (cinematographer), Amir George (award-winning filmmaker and Artistic Director of Kartemquin Films).

The Short Documentary Jury:

Anna Bressanin (US Editor of BBC Reel, the BBC's platform for short documentary), Inga Diev (General Manager of Quat Media), Inti Cordera (documentary filmmaker and producer).

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Hot Docs (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 30th annual edition from April 27 to May 7, 2023, in cinemas across Toronto, with a selection of films available

online to audiences throughout Canada. 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, Hot Docs Deal Maker and The Doc Shop. In celebration of its 30th anniversary and a dedication to excellence in non-fiction storytelling, Hot Docs will present the Podcast Festival Showcase, featuring a slate of today's hottest podcasts live on stage; along with a dynamic line-up of industry panels and master classes featuring podcast game-changers. 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, and operates Hot Docs at Home streaming platform.

Starting Tuesday, March 28, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, April 4, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and/or redeemed online 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 \$19 to regular Festival screenings and \$22 to Special Presentations screenings (\$17-19 members). Special events vary in price. A Festival 12-Pack is \$199 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$279. Hot Docs offers free tickets for all screenings before 5:00 p.m. to those 60+ 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 Group of Funds as its Founding Partner; CBC as its Signature Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario as its Major Supporters.

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