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## HOT DOCS WRAPS EXHILARATING 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL

*SOMEONE LIVES HERE* TAKES CAD 50,000 ROGERS AUDIENCE AWARD; *LAC-MÉGANTIC – THIS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT* DOC SERIES WINS HOT DOCS 2023 AUDIENCE AWARD

**Toronto, ON**— Hot Docs Festival 2023 came to its close last night, bringing 214 films from 72 countries to audiences in Toronto cinemas. The 11-day festival featured 308 live screenings on nine screens at four venues across the city, with 235 live filmmaker Q&As, and five special extended discussions with filmmakers and special guests as part of the Big Ideas Series, presented by Scotia Wealth Management. In celebration of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Hot Docs presented the Podcast Festival Showcase, featuring a slate of today’s hottest podcasts live on stage, *A Wall Is a Screen* site-specific outdoor screening at Ontario Place, and a series of special activations for attendees throughout the Festival. Further building on national audiences cultivated by past online and hybrid editions, 123 official selections started streaming across Canada on Friday, May 5 and will continue through to Tuesday, May 9.

“As the curtain closes on a highly successful 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of Hot Docs Festival, we are reminded once again of the power and impact of documentary—not only in reflecting our world, but also in building community, creating connection and challenging us to play our part in making this world a better place,” shared **Shane Smith**, Hot Docs Artistic Director. “We are humbled by the emphatic reception we received from our famously curious Toronto audiences, whose energy, engagement and enthusiasm are always a Festival highlight for filmmakers, and who continue to inspire our mission to showcase outstanding, outspoken documentaries. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the volunteers, filmmakers, industry delegates, sponsors and partners who helped us bring Hot Docs 2023 to life.”

The **Rogers Audience Award for Best Canadian Documentary**, which recognizes the top Canadian feature as determined by audience poll with a cash prize of CAD 50,000, was announced last night at a free encore screening at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. *Someone Lives Here* (D: Zack Russell | P: Matt King, Andrew Ferguson | Canada)—the story of a young Toronto carpenter building life-saving shelters for unhoused people facing the winter outside during the pandemic, while also facing staunch opposition from the city government—received the prize, courtesy of Rogers Group of Funds.

With CAD 80,000 in cash and prizes announced at the Hot Docs Awards Presentation on Saturday, May 6, and CAD 78,000 in pitch prizes awarded at the close of Hot Docs Forum on Wednesday, May 3, this year the Festival awarded a total of CAD 208,000 in cash and prizes to filmmakers.

Hot Docs Audience Awards are determined by votes submitted by Festival audiences after in-person screenings. At the close of the Festival, it was determined that *Lac-Mégantic – This is Not an Accident* (D: Philippe Falardeau | P: Annie Sirois | Canada)—a captivating four-part series from Oscar-nominated

director Philippe Falardeau that exposes the scandalous causes of one of Canada's worst rail disasters and the urgent changes needed to prevent the next one—placed first in the overall audience poll and won the **Hot Docs Audience Award**.

The top mid-length film in the audience poll, winning the **Audience Award for Mid-Length Documentary**, was *When Spring Came to Bucha* (D: Mila Teshaieva, Marcus Lenz | P: Marcus Lenz | Ukraine, Germany), in which cameras quietly capture the resilience of a people who will not be broken. The top short film, winning the **Audience Award for Short Documentary**, was *Eco-Hack!* (D: Josh Izenberg, Brett Marty | P: Josh Izenberg, Brett Marty | USA), capturing conservation biologist Tim Shield's fight to protect desert tortoise populations from ravens.

The 20 documentaries in the audience poll are:

1. *Lac-Mégantic – This is Not an Accident* (D: Philippe Falardeau | P: Annie Sirois | Canada)
2. *Someone Lives Here* (D: Zack Russell | P: Matt King, Andrew Ferguson | Canada)
3. *20 Days in Mariupol* (D: Mstyslav Chernov | P: Mstyslav Chernov, Michelle Mizner, Raney Aronson-Rath, Derl McCrudden | USA)
4. *The American Gladiators Documentary* (D: Ben Berman, Kirk Johnson (co-director) | P: Russell Wayne Groves, Danny Gabai, Andrew Freston | USA)
5. *Silent House* (D: Farnaz Jurabchian, Mohammadreza Jurabchian | P: Elaheh Nobakht, Farnaz Jurabchian, Mohammadreza Jurabchian | Iran, France, Qatar, Canada, Philippines)
6. *Allihopa: The Dalkurd Story* (D: Kordo Doski | P: Kordo Doski, Lina Hanson, Jose Moreno Brooks, Paul Canterna | Canada, Iraq, USA, Sweden)
7. *Non-Aligned: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (D: Mila Turajlić | P: Carine Chichkowsky, Mila Turajlić | Serbia, France, Croatia, Montenegro, Qatar)
8. *The Stroll* (D: Kristen Lovell, Zackary Drucker | P: Matt Wolf | USA)
9. *Angel Applicant* (D: Ken A. Meyer | P: Ken A. Meyer, Jason Roark | USA)
10. *Who's Afraid of Nathan Law?* (D: Joe Piscatella | P: Matthew Torne, Mark Rinehart, Joe Piscatella | USA, Hong Kong, UK)
11. *Against the Tide* (D: Sarvnik Kaur | P: Koval Bhatia, Sarvnik Kaur | India, France)
12. *Seven Winters in Tehran* (D: Steffi Niedertzoll | P: Melanie Andernach, Knut Lodsén | Germany, France)
13. *Eco-Hack!* (D: Josh Izenberg, Brett Marty | P: Josh Izenberg, Brett Marty | USA)
14. *Name Me Lawand* (D: Edward Lovelace | P: Fleur Nieddu, Sam Arnold, Beyan Taher, Neil Andrews, Marisa Clifford | UK)
15. *We Will Not Fade Away* (D: Alisa Kovalenko | P: Valery Kalmykov, Stephane Siohan, Katarzyna Kuczynska, Tomasz Morawski, Oleksiy Kobelev | Ukraine, France, Poland)
16. *The Deepest Breath* (D: Laura McGann | P: John Battsek, Sarah Thomson, Jamie D'Alton, Anne McLoughlin | UK, Ireland)
17. *Hong Kong Mixtape* (D: San San F Young | P: Nikki Parrott, San San F Young | UK)
18. *El Equipo* (D: Bernardo Ruiz | P: Bernardo Ruiz, Gabriela Alcalde, Fabian Caballero | USA)
19. *When Spring Came to Bucha* (D: Mila Teshaieva, Marcus Lenz | P: Marcus Lenz | Ukraine, Germany)

20. *Invisible Beauty* (D: Bethann Hardison, Frédéric Tcheng | P: Lisa Cortés, Paul Dallas | USA)

Hot Docs' incredibly popular Docs For School program also ran during the Festival, offering teachers across Canada free access to 16 films, including eight official selections from this year's Festival, and accompanying teaching resources linked to curriculum. Hot Docs also presented its annual market and conference, welcoming 1,800 delegates from more than 40 countries. The Hot Docs Industry program featured four days of knowledge sessions and networking events including Hot Docs Forum and Hot Docs Deal Maker, along with additional industry content.

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[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 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](http://www.hotdocs.ca) at [www.hotdocs.ca](http://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.



**30** | CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL  
YEARS | DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL  
**APRIL 27-MAY 7, 2023**



**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.