

Hot Docs' Doc Accelerator Lab Welcomes New Fellows to 2021 Festival
and Celebrates Success of Its Alumni

Toronto, ON, April 21, 2021 – Hot Docs is pleased to announce the 11 filmmakers participating in this year's Doc Accelerator Lab, a bespoke private lab that nurtures the next generation of Canadian documentary filmmakers through skills-training workshops and mentorship programs. The Doc Accelerator Lab is supported by Netflix through the Canadian Storytellers Project, an initiative launched in 2018 that invests in core funding and professional development programs for Canadian filmmakers, and serves filmmakers from groups whose stories have been historically underrepresented on screen.

Hot Docs is also thrilled to celebrate the work of several Doc Accelerator alumni whose Lab projects are now making their world premiere at this year's Festival, including 2016 fellow Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and her debut feature *Kímmapiiyipitssini: The Meaning of Empathy*, which goes inside the Kainai First Nation in Alberta to show the community's efforts to heal from the opioid crisis; and 2017 fellow Yasmine Mathurin with her film *One of Ours*, in which a Haitian-born youth wrestles with his sense of belonging in his Indigenous adoptive family after being racially profiled.

"We're so pleased to celebrate the accomplishments of our Doc Accelerator fellows, and are honoured to welcome a new group of filmmakers eager to learn and advance their skills through these signature training and mentorship programs," said **Lisa Valencia-Svensson**, Acting Industry Programs Director for Hot Docs. "Thank you to Netflix for their support of this program, and their commitment to championing these emerging Canadian filmmakers so they can realize their visions and tell their stories through the art of cinema."

"Canada is home to world-class documentary talent and this collaboration provides an opportunity for emerging Canadian creators to cultivate their unique and varied voices," said **Stéphane Cardin**, Director of Public Policy for Netflix Canada. "Our congratulations to this year's fellows as well as to alumni who are participating in the festival—we look forward to seeing your remarkable works."

Hot Docs would also like to recognize filmmaker Lulu Wei, who went through the Doc Accelerator Lab in 2018 with their film *There's No Place Like This Place Anyplace*, about the gentrification of Toronto's Annex neighbourhood. The film was an Official Selection of last year's Hot Docs Festival and Wei was recently nominated for Canadian Screen Awards for Best Direction, Documentary Series, and Best Writing, Documentary, for the film.

The 2021 Doc Accelerator fellows are:

Niya Abdullahi, Toronto, Ontario

Niya is a filmmaker and the founder of @Habasooda, a platform dedicated to sharing the richness of the Muslim experience through a variety of storytelling avenues including short films and data-based graphics. Themes of identity, liberation and resistance inform her work, and she uses art as a vessel to promote social change. Her docuseries, *Muslim Love*, is set to launch summer 2021.

Katia Café-Fébrissy, Toronto, Ontario

An award-winning writer, director and playwright, Katia's writing credits include plays, documentary scripts, short narratives. Her directorial credits range from cinema vérité, experimental docs and

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

docu-drama to VR projects, institutional films to music video, episodic web series and plays. Katia is a member of the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), the Playwrights Guild of Canada and SARTEC, the French language Writers' Guild of Canada. She's an alumna of the Netflix-BANFF Diversity of Voices Initiative, Women in the Director's Chair and Director's Lab North. She teaches directing skills at Sheridan College and is a Filmmaker Mentor-in-residence at the Toronto Arts Foundation. She holds an M.A. in Literature and Languages from the Université of Paris VIII, France and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Creative Documentary Filmmaking from the Varan Doc Film Centre, France.

Osas Eweka-Smith, Edmonton, Alberta

Osas is passionate about telling stories that keep her grounded in her roots, elevate the human spirit, and bring marginalized voices to the forefront. In 2020, she debuted her first film *Beyond Curls & Kinks*, which follows a group of women who challenge beauty standards and empower each other and the next generation to embrace their coily, kinky, curly hair. The film explores the complex relationship they have with their Afro-textured hair and issues such as self-esteem, confidence and identity, and challenges society to see women and girls beyond their curls and kinks. Osas has made content for TELUS, and is looking for opportunities to create more exciting and meaningful work.

Yazmeen Kanji, Maple, Ontario

Yazmeen Kanji is an emerging filmmaker and the founder of Films with A Cause, an advocacy and consulting organization for underrepresented communities. Her first documentary, *From Syria To Hope* (2019), explores the resettlement of Syrian refugee families and was awarded Best Short Doc at the 2019 Toronto short Film Festival. Yazmeen directed *With Love From Munera* (2020), which premiered at the 2020 Inside Out Film Festival and was an official selection at TIFF Next Wave 2021. Yazmeen supports Charles Officer's production company Canesugar Filmworks, and is producing a short doc about faith-based healing, directed by the Oscar-nominated filmmaker Sami Khan.

Javier Lovera, Toronto, Ontario

Javier is a Toronto-based documentary film director, and a commercial photographer and cinematographer. He was born and raised in Colombia and immigrated to Canada in 2006 after receiving a M.Sc. in Aerospace Engineering from Purdue University. He is in postproduction for his short film *Ride Fair*, commissioned by the Hot Docs Citizen Minutes fund, and received a Filmmakers Assistance Program grant by from the National Film Board of Canada in 2014. He is an alumni of DOC Institute's 2020 Breakthrough Program, RIDM 2020 Talent Lab, and 2020 Hot Docs Deal Maker Program. His select editorial and commercial clients include Amnesty International, *The Guardian UK*, *The Globe and Mail*, *ELLE Magazine*, *FASHION Magazine*, BMW, NIKE, Joe Fresh, and ROOTS. In 2009 he received the Applied Arts Photo Annual award in the Fashion and Beauty Category.

Corey Misquita, Toronto, Ontario

Corey is a Bahraini born filmmaker and artist based in Toronto. She graduated Humber College's Film & Television Production program in 2014 and continued her career as an editor. Her work focuses on the LGBTQ+ community and aims to uplift marginalized and underrepresented voices. Corey has worked on a variety of mixed media, including a narrative feature film, music videos, short documentaries and podcasts. Her films have been showcased at film festivals and publications in North America such as the Female Eye Film Festival, Xtra Magazine and Fader Magazine. Corey just recently finished post-production on "Shine True" a documentary series for Fuse TV.

Sunita Miya Muganza, Toronto, Ontario

A writer and director, Sunita founded production company Grassroots International Productions, also known as Gripmedia Films, in 2016. In 2017, she was selected for the POV 3RD Street Media Program. That same year, Sunita directed her first short documentary, *Badassery*, a film about unapologetically black female DJs pursuing their passions and crafting their careers in a male-dominated industry. Since then, Sunita has produced and directed several projects including *The Intersection*, *Love & Green Tea*, and *Connexion* (Season 2: Play). Her contribution as a Production Manager and Associate Producer to the 2019 CBC docuseries *Devout and Out* earned Sunita her first Banff International Rookie Award nomination for her work. She was recently selected to be a part of the Reelworld Film Festival's E20 Program, an initiative that connects some of Canada's most talented emerging BIPOC talent with industry executives and professionals within the Canadian entertainment industry.

Carol Nguyen, Montreal, Quebec

A Vietnamese Canadian filmmaker based in Toronto and Montreal, Carol's films often explore the subjects of cultural identity, family and memory. Her most recent film *No Crying at the Dinner Table* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and had its international premiere at IDFA 2019, where she was also invited as the Opening Night speaker. The film also received the Jury Prize for Short Documentary at SXSW. Carol is a 2018 Sundance Ignite fellow, Adobe Creativity Scholar and a TIFF Share Her Journey ambassador, where she strives to empower diverse voices and women through her own stories and personal experiences in the film industry.

Sandro Augusto Santos Silva, Edmonton, Alberta

Sandro Silva is an Edmonton-based documentary filmmaker and the co-founder of Dona Ana Films & Multimedia. He's the executive producer and producer for the award-winning, independently-produced documentary short *3 Siblings* (2018). Before moving to Canada, he provided production services through Dona Ana Films & Multimedia on various documentary projects in his native Brazil, including *André on Earth* (2013, NTR), *Johnny in Oranje* (2014, RTL), *Beyond the Map* (2016, Google), and *Rotten*, Ep. 4 "Big Bird" (2018, Netflix). Sandro worked as a production coordinator on multiple projects for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. He co-directed and co-produced the short experimental film *1000 Brazils of Truth* (2021) and is currently developing a docuseries.

Weiye Su, Regina, Saskatchewan

Documentary director Weiye Su studied cinema at the University of Regina, winning acclaims for his student films *Evelyn and I* (2017) and *My World Is No Longer the World I Know* (2018). He recently directed the NFB production documentary, *Jia* (2020). Weiye aims to tell cultural and personal stories about family and home that evoke new understandings about the society. After graduation, Weiye continues to pursue his passion in photography and abstract painting. His art photograph, *Mountain I* won the Jurors' Pick in LensCulture Art Photography Awards 2021.

Creative BC Fellow

Caroline Lee, Vancouver, BC

Caroline So Jung Lee is a settler Korean filmmaker and interdisciplinary artist born in Tkaronto, the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the

Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. Caroline currently lives on the unceded ancestral territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations (Vancouver, BC). In 2019, she won the VIFF Best Canadian Short Film Award, Video Out Distribution Award and President's Media Award for Live Action for her short experimental documentary, *At the Bottom of the Sea*. She graduated from Emily Carr University's Film program with a minor in Social Practice and Community Engagement in 2020. Her films have screened at DOXA, VIFF, Hot Docs, Antimatter and Portland IFF. Caroline often explores the themes of diasporic identity, feminism, spirituality, community, ecology, sensation and movement in her work and employs analogue handmade film, performance, autoethnography and sound as mediums for expression.

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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.

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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