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## HOT DOCS ANNOUNCES HEATHER HAYNES AS NEW DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING AND INTRODUCES 2025 FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING TEAM

- 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL HOT DOCS FESTIVAL RETURNS TO TORONTO APRIL 24 TO MAY 4, 2025; FILM SUBMISSIONS NOW OPEN

**Toronto, Canada** – Hot Docs is delighted to announce the promotion of **Heather Haynes**, Director of Festival Programming, to the newly expanded role of **Director of Programming**. In her new role, Heather will oversee programming for Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, Toronto’s Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema and Docs for Schools, the organization’s national educational program. Throughout her 19-year journey with Hot Docs, Heather has been instrumental in the organization’s success and in nurturing the careers of numerous documentary filmmakers. Her passion for the art form, combined with her thoughtful approach, has earned her a reputation as a trusted leader in the community, as reflected in her impressive track record of achievements. She assumes her new role effective immediately.

“We are thrilled to promote Heather Haynes to Director of Programming,” shared **Janice Dawe**, Hot Docs’ Interim Executive Director. “Heather has been a vital part of the Hot Docs family and a tireless champion of documentary filmmakers and their stories. Her deep care for filmmakers is matched by her steadfast commitment to bringing powerful, thought-provoking documentaries to our audiences, offering an essential window into real-life stories that cultivate empathy, understanding and critical thought. We are confident that under Heather’s leadership, Hot Docs will continue to deliver on its mission for years to come, and we look forward to her helping shape our next chapter.”

“After nearly two decades at Hot Docs, I am deeply honoured to step into the role of Director of Programming,” shared **Heather Haynes**. “This organization has been a true passion of mine, and I am in awe of the incredible team that has helped build this remarkable legacy. My colleagues, whose dedication and resilience have been unwavering in the face of our recent challenges, inspire me daily. While our work is far from finished, we are steadfast in our commitment to re-stabilize and secure a future where we continue to support Canadian and international filmmakers, strengthen the documentary industry and serve our devoted audiences with the passion and excellence they deserve.”

Heather Haynes previously served as Hot Docs’ Senior International Programmer and Associate Director of Festival Programming. She has spent over a decade working with filmmakers in Mexico, Central and South America, and continues to collaborate with filmmakers worldwide on work-in-progress sessions, labs and juries. Heather has also programmed for the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, imagineNATIVE, and aluCine Latin Film + Media Arts Festival, and was a recommender for Chicken & Egg Pictures’ (Egg)celerator Labs. She produced three award-winning documentaries, including *I Am Ishi: The Performance Art Film*, directed by Dana Claxton. In addition to her documentary work, Heather has produced innovative visual, performance art and theatre projects focused on human rights and cultural

issues. She is the founder and former Executive/Artistic Director of Toronto Free Gallery, founder of Culture Storm and former publisher of Fuse Magazine. She was also a founding member and producer for Indigenous Fashion Week Toronto.

The **32<sup>nd</sup> annual Hot Docs Festival** will take place **April 24 to May 4, 2025**, in Toronto. As the newly appointed Director of Programming, Heather will lead the curation of an outstanding lineup of more than 100 documentaries, featuring compelling stories from both Canadian and international filmmakers. She will oversee the Hot Docs' programming team, combining the expertise of long-standing members with the fresh perspectives of new talent, to curate a dynamic and exceptional festival experience.

The Hot Docs Festival 2025 programming team includes Festival Programming Manager Kristin Boivin, Senior International Features Programmers Gabor Pertic and Lucila Moctezuma, International Features Programmers Gugi Gumilang and Vicci Ho and Senior International Shorts and Canadian Programmer Mariam Zaidi. Vivian Belik serves as International Mid-Lengths Programmer, with Alex Rogalski as Senior Canadian Programmer and Aisha Jamal as Canadian Programmer. New additions to the programming team include International Features Programmers Kinga Binkowska, Julian Carrington, Lauren Clarke and David Knipe, Associate International Features Programmers Simone Estrin and Elspeth Arbow, International Shorts Programmer Hawa Essuman and Associate International Shorts Programmer Reza Sameni.

Submissions for Hot Docs Festival 2025 are now open at [hotdocs.ca/submit](https://hotdocs.ca/submit).

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Hot Docs ([www.hotdocs.ca](https://www.hotdocs.ca)), North America's leading 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 32<sup>nd</sup> annual edition from April 24 to May 4, 2025, in cinemas across Toronto. 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.

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