

For Immediate Release: March 14, 2023

FIRST SLATE OF SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS REVEALED FOR 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF HOT DOCS FESTIVAL

- HIGHLY ANTICIPATED PROGRAM TO FEATURE RIVETING TRUE-LIFE STORIES AND NOTEWORTHY SUBJECTS: DONNA SUMMER, STEPHEN CURRY, MICHAEL J. FOX, BETHANN HARDISON, IGOR LEVIT, RUTH REICHL, AND MORE

Toronto, ON – Hot Docs announced today the first slate of films to screen as part of its highly anticipated **Special Presentations** program at the 2023 Festival, running April 27 to May 7 in Toronto. The Special Presentations program, which features high-profile subjects, award-winning films and filmmakers, and masterful perspectives on current events and pressing issues, will screen in cinemas across downtown Toronto during the landmark 30th-anniversary Festival.

The 2023 Special Presentations program covers an extensive array of subjects, from a behind-the-runway look at racial diversity in the fashion industry to a harrowing documentation of the recruitment of child soldiers in Uganda. International premieres include ***Black Barbie: A Documentary***, a deep dive into the true story of Black Barbie, from her origins to her contemporary presence; ***Food and Country***, New York Times' food critic Ruth Reichl's uncovering of our broken food system and the innovators risking everything to transform it; ***Stephen Curry: Underrated***, the compelling story of one of the greatest NBA players working today; and ***Periodical***, an eye-opening documentary examining the politics, science, and mystery of the menstrual cycle.

2023 Special Presentations will also include the North American premieres of ***Blix Not Bombs***, an insightful look into the career and politics of Swedish diplomat Hans Blix, a former weapons inspector for the United Nations; ***Igor Levit – No Fear***, an up-close portrait of the young piano sensation Igor Levit as he searches for his identity as an artist; ***Praying for Armageddon***, a potent exploration of the movement of American Christian fundamentalists fighting for the end of the world; and ***Theatre of Violence***, the story of the first former Ugandan child soldier to face trial in The Hague.

Making its Canadian Premiere is ***The Deepest Breath***, a thrilling ocean epic following two divers as they chase their dreams through the depth of the sea; ***Innocence***, a reflection on violence highlighting the Israeli Defence Forces' mandatory service; ***Invisible Beauty***, pioneering Black model Bethann Hardison's exploration of racial diversity in the fashion world; ***Love to Love You, Donna Summer***, a celebration of the life and career of the legendary disco diva; and ***STILL: A Michael J. Fox Movie***, the extraordinary journey of the Canadian icon's rise to fame alongside his private journey following his diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. These films, and many more, will be presented as part of Hot Docs Festival 2023.

The full selection of films to screen at Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival 2023 will be announced at a press conference on March 28. Ticket packages are now on sale online. Ticket

package redemption and single ticket sales for Hot Docs members are available starting March 28. Single ticket sales open to the public on April 4.

This year's Special Presentations program is sponsored by Crave.

The first announced slate of Special Presentations includes:

BLACK BARBIE: A DOCUMENTARY

D: Lagueria Davis | P: Aaliyah Williams, Lagueria Davis | USA | 2023 | 100 min | International Premiere
We all know the Malibu blonde with a big head and bigger fan following, but do you know her Black counterpart? Discover the true story of Black Barbie from her origins to her contemporary presence in Mattel's metaverse of dolls.

BLIX NOT BOMBS

D: Greta Stocklassa | P: Radovan Šíbrt, Alžbeta Karásková, Erik Winker, Mario Adamson | Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden | 2023 | 85 min | North American Premiere
What the hell is happening in the world? A millennial filmmaker looks to UN diplomat Hans Blix, who led the investigation into weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, for answers. Can diplomacy still play a role in averting catastrophe?

THE DEEPEST BREATH

D: Laura McGann | P: John Battsek, Sarah Thomson, Jamie D'Alton, Anne McLoughlin, Robert Ford | UK, Ireland | 2022 | 109 min | Canadian Premiere
Champion free-diver Alessia and safety diver Stephen seemed destined for one another above and below the water. Experience the astonishing risks they take as Stephen helps Alessia chase her dream of a new world record in this thrilling ocean epic.

FOOD AND COUNTRY

D: Laura Gabbert | P: Laura Gabbert, Ruth Reichl, Paula P. Manzanedo, Caroline Libresco | USA | 2023 | 99 min | International Premiere
Concerned about the survival of small farmers, ranchers and chefs hobbled by America's policy of producing cheap food, Ruth Reichl, trailblazing chef, food writer and editor reaches across political and social divides to uncover a broken food system and innovators risking everything to transform it.

IGOR LEVIT – NO FEAR

D: Regina Schilling | P: Thomas Kufus | Germany | 2022 | 118 min | North American Premiere
The sold-out world tour of classical piano sensation Igor Levit was an intended focus of this up-close portrait, but when COVID hits, a career-defining crisis takes centre stage. Witness a true virtuoso transform musical performance with or without an audience.

INNOCENCE

D: Guy Davidi | P: Sigrid Dyekjær, Hilla Medalia, Margreth Jonasdottir, Kaarle Aho | Denmark, Israel, Finland, Iceland | 2022 | 100 min | Canadian Premiere

Mandatory service in the Israeli Defense Forces makes citizens confront the prospect of violence and the inevitable choice to accept, reject or rationalize it. Diaries and videos of both eager and reluctant recruits question whether innocence and militarization can co-exist.

INVISIBLE BEAUTY

D: Bethann Hardison, Frédéric Tcheng | P: Lisa Cortés, Paul Dallas | USA | 2023 | 115 min | Canadian Premiere

Pioneering Black model Bethann Hardison turns the camera on herself as she takes us behind the runway and into her life as an agent, activist, and, most importantly, a mentor in the fight for racial diversity.

LOVE TO LOVE YOU, DONNA SUMMER

D: Roger Ross Williams, Brooklyn Sudano | P: Julie Goldman, Christopher Clements, Carolyn Hepburn, Roger Ross Williams, David Blackman, J. Daniel Torres | USA | 2023 | 107 min | Canadian Premiere
Featuring a trove of exclusive, previously unseen footage, the life and times of the one and only Donna Summer are richly detailed in this vibrant exploration of the singer whose iconic voice changed music forever.

PERIODICAL

D: Lina Lyte Plioplyte | P: Pegah Farahmand | USA | 2022 | 95 min | International Premiere
Enough with “being on the rag” and ditch “Aunt Flo,” it’s time to start treating menstruation with some respect. Activists, doctors and celebrities deconstruct sexist junk science and share the truth: your period is an asset and not “the curse.”

PRAYING FOR ARMAGEDDON

D: Tonje Hessen Schei, Michael Rowley | P: Torstein Parelus, Ingrid G. Aune Falch, Christian Aune Falch | Norway | 2022 | 96 min | North American Premiere

By infiltrating the machinery of the US politics, powerful American Evangelicals push to realize the biblical prophecy of Armageddon and manifest the Apocalypse, exercising influence that not only threatens American democracy but also foreign policy in the Middle East.

STEPHEN CURRY: UNDERRATED

D: Peter Nicks | P: Peter Nicks, Ryan Coogler, Erick Peyton, Sean Havey, Ben Cotner, Marissa Torres Ericson | USA | 2023 | 110 min | International Premiere

The life of one of the greatest NBA players playing today is explored with unprecedented access, from his humble beginnings to his now historic record-breaking career.

STILL: A MICHAEL J. FOX MOVIE

D: Davis Guggenheim | P: Davis Guggenheim, Annetta Marion, Jonathan King, Will Cohen | USA | 2022 | 95 min | Canadian Premiere

With trademark wit, honesty and insight, Canadian icon Michael J. Fox recounts his improbable rise to the heights of Hollywood stardom alongside his private journey following his diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease at 29.

THEATRE OF VIOLENCE

D: Lukasz Konopa, Emil Langballe | P: Helle Faber, Heidi Kim Andersen | Denmark | 2023 | 106 min |
North American Premiere

As the first former child soldier—a forced recruit into Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army—faces trial in The Hague, his lawyer prepares a compelling defense that questions the international justice system, culpability and how communities recover from trauma.

Film stills of Special Presentation titles are available at <https://bit.ly/3SWIHQI>

-30-

[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. 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 or in person at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Box Office, located at 506 Bloor Street West (hours vary daily in accordance with 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.

Media Contact:

Juan M. Gonzalez-Calcano



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

Media Relations Manager
Hot Docs
jgonzalezcalcano@hotdocs.ca

A decorative graphic in the top right corner consisting of several overlapping speech bubbles in shades of grey and light green. The text "PRESS RELEASE" is written in a bold, uppercase sans-serif font across the bottom of these bubbles.

PRESS RELEASE

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

HOT DOCS CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL
720 Spadina Avenue, Suite 402, Toronto On, Canada M5S 2T9 416.203.2155

WWW.HOTDOCS.CA