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HOT DOCS FORUM 2024 WRAPS WITH OVER CAD 47,000 IN PRIZES AWARDED TO FOUR PITCH TEAMS

Toronto, ON – Hot Docs is pleased to announce the winners of over CAD 47,000 at the 25th edition of the **Hot Docs Forum**, the Festival’s acclaimed international co-financing market event, and the flagship industry event, including CAD 35,000 in *first look* Pitch Prizes, the CAD 10,000 CMF-Hot Docs Forum Canadian Pitch Prize, presented in partnership with the Canada Media Fund, and CAD 2,140 as well as goods and services donated by a room of observers in the Cuban Hat Award. The Hot Docs Forum is generously supported by Presenting Forum Partner Canada Media Fund.

“As we celebrate 25 years of the Hot Docs Forum, we are more confident than ever in its enduring role as the premier platform for financing and talent discovery,” shared **Elizabeth Radshaw**, Industry Programs Director. “We take great pride in witnessing how our flagship event remains a gathering hub for our community, fostering the reimagining of the marketplace of the future.”

“We are overwhelmed and overjoyed by the immense trust that our incredible cohort of filmmakers and decision makers have in Hot Docs to make co-production and co-financial connections and usher their films to audiences around the world,” added **Dorota Lech**, Industry Programmer and Forum Producer. Many thanks to the tenacious and encouraging voices heard throughout the room over two robust pitching days.”

Financed by participants of Hot Docs’ *first look*, a curated access program for philanthropic supporters of and investors in documentary film, ***first look* Pitch Prizes** are decided on by participants after viewing all pitches. Awarded directly to the filmmakers, the prizes take them one step closer to completing their film and creating lasting social impact for the causes associated with their work. The first prize of **CAD 20,000** went to ***Arrest the Midwife (WT)*** (D: Elaine Epstein | P: Elaine Epstein, Robin Hessman, Ruth Ann Harnisch | Underdog Films, Inc. (USA)), in which the arrest of three midwives serving Amish and Mennonite communities spurs an unlikely group of activists to join the fight for reproductive rights. The second prize of **CAD 10,000** was awarded to ***Autumn of the Patriarch*** (D: Anna Bogoliubova | P: Torstein Grude Ruwê Yuxinawá, Oddleiv Vik, Raphael Pélissou, Valérie Montmartin, Iikka Vehkalahti, Sinisa Juricic | Piraya Film AS (Norway), Little Big Story (France), IV Films (Finland), Nukleus Film (Croatia)), a documentary dystopia that explores the survival strategies of people who live inside the modern Russian dictatorship which itself has become a formidable force of mass murder. The third prize of **CAD 5,000** went to ***Under the Flags, the Sun*** (D: Juanjo Pereira | P: Paula Zyngierman, Ivana Urizar, Gabriela Sabaté, Leandro Listorti, Juanjo Pereira | Cine Mio / Ivana Urizar (Paraguay), MaravillaCine S.R.L. (Argentina), Sabaté Films S.R.L. (Paraguay), Juanjo Pereira (Paraguay)), a film that reconstructs Paraguay’s untold history using film material found around the world, delving into Alfredo Stroessner’s dictatorship—among Latin America’s longest—with traces still felt today. Statement from *first look* participants: “Every project that pitched had incredible merit. All the prizes honour bravery in a time of fear.”

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

The **CMF-Hot Docs Forum Canadian Pitch Prize**, presented in partnership with the Canada Media Fund, is a **CAD 10,000** cash prize that is awarded to the best Canadian pitch and is intended to go towards the production and completion of the winning project. The 2024 CMF-Hot Docs Forum Canadian Pitch Prize was awarded to ***This Land of Ours*** (D: Ngardy Conteh George | P: Ngardy Conteh George, Alison Duke | Oya Media Group Inc. (Canada)).

The Cuban Hat Award, which offers “real cash, no strings attached” support for powerful and unique projects, was awarded to the best pitch as decided by Forum attendees. The 2024 Award went to ***Anatomy of a Life*** (D: Emma Francis-Snyder | P: Tiffany Fisher Love | Anatomy of a Life LLC (USA)), a hybrid film that explores the end of life, as imagined by the dying and as experienced by the ones they are leaving behind. Established in 2009 in an impromptu display of collegial support, the Cuban Hat Award is decided by ballots collected from Hot Docs Forum observers, and the cash prize is raised by passing the hat. This year’s collection brought in CAD 746.15, USD 192.12, € 15.95, 15 Colombian Pesos, 2,000 Hungarian Forint, 2,000 South Korean Won, 200 Ukrainian Hryvnia, 7,000 Indonesian Rupiah, 100 Danish Krone, and 30 Nicaraguan Cordoba. Hot Docs will match the total cash prizes, bringing the total amount to **CAD 2,140**. The prize also included two All-Access Passes to Hot Docs 2025, one pass to IDFA, two passes to the Camden International Film Festival, a two-night stay in Brooklyn, a fundraising or distribution consultation and a one-year subscription to Women Make Movies, a virtual consultation session with BBC Content’s Lucie Kon, a \$100 IOU and feedback call with Chicken & Egg Pictures’ Elaisha Stokes, and other exciting gifts.

Cuban Hat Project, represented by Makila’s Axel Laroche and François Rihouay, awarded the **Best Decision Maker Award to Rasha Salti from ARTE France – La Lucarne**.

At this year’s Hot Docs Forum, 20 projects—represented by 22 filmmakers, 11 of whom are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) and 16 of whom are women—representing 18 countries, were presented to a gathering of essential key funders and decision makers as well as filmmakers, producers, and other observers. A total of 58 projects pitched in more than 900 pre-arranged meetings to more than 100 decision makers during Deal Maker, the Festival’s one-on-one curated pitch event.

This year, Hot Docs offered a robust industry program, with four days of Hot Docs Industry knowledge sessions, networking events and programs that included the Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker and additional industry content. Over 1400 registered delegates, including more than 200 decision makers from 69 countries participated in this year’s live industry programs at Hot Docs. Hot Docs Industry presented: a Keynote Session featuring the highly regarded filmmaker, author and organizer Astra Taylor in conversation with *Union* director Brett Story, a dynamic session with *To Kill a Tiger* director Nisha Pahuja and the masterminds behind the marketing and distribution campaign of this Academy Award-nominated film, an in-depth panel on Spanish co-productions, a Festival Symposium reimagining the future of documentary marketplace and festival spaces, two works-in-progress screenings, a session exploring AI’s place in documentary and its ramifications, a discussion about marketing films and connecting with audiences with the co-founders of Distribution Advocates, 11 Close Up sessions with

top commissioners and key funders, and 11 short-format Hot Takes sessions covering timely topics such as equity in the industry, hyperlocal storytelling in BC and Alberta, contract guidelines for independent producers, podcasting and more.

Hot Docs also hosted five official delegations from: Ontario, led by DOC; Chile, led by ChileDOC; Italy, led by the Italian Trade Commission; Manitoba, led by OnScreen Manitoba; and Spain, led by ICEX Spain Trade and Investment. The 2024 Hot Docs Delegations Program is supported by Telefilm Canada.

The Hot Docs Forum wishes to thank Presenting Forum Partner Canada Media Fund and Founding Partner Telefilm Canada. The Hot Docs Forum receives additional support from A&E, Banff World Media Festival, Blue Ice Pictures, C21 Media, Canadian Media Producers Association, CBC, ChileDoc, Chicken and Egg Pictures, CNN Collection, Crave, Directors Guild of Canada and DGC Ontario, ESPN Films, European Film Promotion, Front Row Insurance, Gardiner Roberts LLP, Italian Trade Commission, National Film Board of Canada, Netflix, Ontario Creates, Playback, Realscreen, Rogers, Scotia Wealth Management, SODEC, the City of Toronto, Variety, and Vistek.

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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 31st annual edition from April 25 to May 5, 2024, in cinemas across Toronto. 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 and Hot Docs Deal Maker. 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.

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 \$20 to regular Festival screenings and \$23 to Special Presentations screenings (\$18-\$20 members). Special events vary in price. A Festival 12-Pack is \$209 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$299. Hot Docs offers free tickets for all screenings before 5:00 p.m. to seniors 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 as its Founding Partner; CBC as its Signature Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the Canada Media Fund as its Major Supporters.

FILM STILLS AVAILABLE

Media Download Site: <https://downloads.hotdocs.ca/downloads>

Password: media2024

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