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## HOT DOCS ANNOUNCES 2025 FESTIVAL, GRADUAL RESUMPTION OF PROGRAMMING AT HOT DOCS TED ROGERS CINEMA AND PATH FORWARD FOR THE ORGANIZATION

- 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL HOT DOCS FESTIVAL RETURNS TO TORONTO APRIL 24 TO MAY 4, 2025; FILM SUBMISSIONS NOW OPEN
- HOT DOCS PROGRAMMING GRADUALLY RESUMES AT CINEMA DECEMBER 4 WITH LAUNCH OF 2024/25 DOC SOUP SERIES
  - APPLICATIONS FOR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOW BEING ACCEPTED
- BUYERS BEING SOUGHT TO ENSURE CINEMA'S FUTURE FOR HOT DOCS AND THE CITY

**Toronto, Canada** – Hot Docs is pleased to announce dates for its 2025 Festival, the gradual resumption of programming at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, and the organization's plan forward. After an intensive period of cost-cutting measures and stabilization efforts, program assessments and internal restructuring, Hot Docs will resume operations. Over the past four months, the Hot Docs team has worked tirelessly to address the organization's financial challenges and governance issues, and significant progress has been made to stabilize the organization and establish a solid foundation for a sustainable path forward.

"We are absolutely thrilled to share this news," said Hot Docs' Interim Executive Director, **Janice Dawe**. "We are grateful to our steadfast sponsors, donors and public sector stakeholders whose outpouring of support has given us the confidence to move forward. We would not be in this position if it weren't for these champions of Hot Docs – from the individual donors who gave during our spring campaign, to the incredibly gracious donors who converted their designated gifts to operational support and to the many elected officials at all levels of government who are standing up for culture and working diligently to help secure funding."

In September, Hot Docs announced the limited reopening of Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema after a summer closure necessitated by the organization's financial challenges. Today's announcements follow that positive first step and are made with confidence that Hot Docs will continue to deliver on its mission to support documentary filmmakers and showcase their work in the upcoming year, as it has done for the past three decades.

The **32<sup>nd</sup> annual Hot Docs Festival** will take place April 24 to May 4, 2025, in Toronto. Festival Programming Director Heather Haynes will lead the curation of an outstanding lineup of more than 100 documentaries from Canada and around the world. Submissions are now open at [hotdocs.ca/submit](https://hotdocs.ca/submit).

Industry programs offered at the Festival are currently being planned to prioritize intimate networking opportunities, meaningful knowledge sharing and impactful market initiatives. Details will be announced later this month.

Hot Docs thanks the Festival's major sponsors, foundations, arts councils and government agencies who have unanimously expressed their desire for the event's return, many of whom, including Founding Partner Rogers, have already confirmed their support for the 2025 edition.

Hot Docs will gradually resume its own programming season at **Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema** starting on Wednesday, December 4, with the launch of the long-running and much-loved Doc Soup screening series, which features premieres of new documentaries hot off the festival circuit and post-screening Q&As with guest directors. The series opener will be announced later this month, and subscriptions will go on sale in the coming weeks.

In addition to Doc Soup and first-run documentaries, audiences can expect the return of many popular curated series and special events.

**Hot Docs' Board of Directors** have taken significant steps to address governance issues and prepare the organization for new executive leadership to guide it through this next phase. After scaling down to a three-person working board in June to more efficiently address the organization's challenges, the Board is actively planning to rebuild its membership this winter. Additionally, the Board is excited to announce the initiation of recruitment efforts for a permanent Executive Director to lead Hot Docs into its next chapter. The Board is dedicated to ensuring that the organization takes the right steps during this process to identify an individual who will not only excel in leadership but also resonate with our mission and community. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply.

While today's announcements reflect the team's incredible work to stabilize Hot Docs, confidently reopen the Cinema and deliver the 2025 Festival, the organization is still working through two years of operating deficits, the majority of which can be attributed to the ownership and operation of the Cinema. As part of its longer-term rebuilding strategy, Hot Docs has decided to seek a new owner for its Cinema at 506 Bloor West and secure a lease-back arrangement that will allow programming at the Cinema to continue. The organization is actively seeking a buyer who values cultural spaces and creative enterprise, and who demonstrates a commitment to the legacy of the Cinema as a vital hub in the city.

"Owning the Cinema for the past 12 years has been an incredible opportunity for Hot Docs, allowing us to expand our reach and impact and those of the stories we've showcased on our screen," said **Nicholas de Pencier**, co-chair of Hot Docs' Board of Directors. "But current financial conditions—including rising interest rates and the post-pandemic recovery of audiences—have made it extremely challenging. We're confident that finding the right buyer will allow us to refocus on our mission to support documentary filmmakers and continue to celebrate their work at the Cinema and Festival, while also addressing our deficit and ensuring our long-term viability."

Hot Docs' history with the Cinema has been one of collaboration and cultural impact, and this next phase presents an exciting opportunity for a new owner to join in supporting the continued success of the venue. The organization remains committed to securing a future that balances its mission and the community's needs, while ensuring a sustainable foundation for the years to come.

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[Hot Docs \(www.hotdocs.ca\)](http://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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