

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, May 15, 2024

SEVEN EXCEPTIONAL AFRICAN DOC PROJECTS SELECTED AS RECIPIENTS OF \$115,000 CAD INVESTMENT FROM HOT DOCS-BLUE ICE DOCS FUND

Toronto, ON – Hot Docs and Blue Ice Docs are thrilled to unveil the recipients of \$115,000 in development and production grants, supporting seven remarkable African documentary projects. The **Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund**, celebrating its thirteenth year, continues to empower more African documentary filmmakers to tell their stories and contribute to the next generation of African documentary talent. Chosen from 108 applications from 26 countries, three of the selected projects will receive development grants, two will be provided with production grants, and two will get post-production grants. These projects represent a diverse array of voices and stories from the African Continent, each poised to leave an indelible mark in the world of non-fiction filmmaking.

“These brilliant filmmakers have presented unique and relevant projects that showcase their unwavering vision, talent, passion, and storytelling prowess,” shared **Elizabeth Radshaw**, Hot Docs’ Director of Industry Programs. “We are proud to champion their vision as they progress towards the completion of their projects.”

The Fund provides development grants of up to \$10,000 and production grants of up to \$40,000 to four to ten projects annually. Each year, up to five funded projects are invited to participate in a year-long mentorship program, which includes private filmmaker labs at Hot Docs and the Durban FilmMart/Durban International Film Festival or other festivals and markets in Africa. The Fund also collaborates with The New York Times—Op-Docs to commission shorts from African filmmakers to showcased on The Times’s Emmy® Award-winning online forum.

Since its establishment in 2011, the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund has supported 100 unique projects from 26 countries, with \$1,433,000 granted to date.

“The Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund continues to play an essential role in the industry, nurturing and amplifying the voices of bold African doc filmmakers, while helping them launch their non-fiction projects and deliver these vital stories to a global audience,” added **Neil Tabatznik**, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs co-founder. “Many congratulations to this year’s recipients; I look forward to seeing their projects grow and succeed.”

Eligible projects were considered by the Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund Committee, which included Ayman El Amir (Felucca Films), Hot Docs Industry (Elizabeth Radshaw, Industry Programs Director, and María José Arauz, Industry Programmer of Funds & Labs), Khalid Shamis (TubaFilms) and Maia von Lekow (Circle & Square Productions).

Applications for the next round of disbursements will start on October 2, 2024. For further information on the application process, eligibility requirements and deadlines, visit www.hotdocs.ca/industry/film-funds/hot-docs-blue-ice-docs-fund.

The recipients of the 2024 Hot Docs-Blue Ice Labs Docs Fund grants are:

Development Grants:

AKAL

Director: Basma Rkioui
Producer: Basma Rkioui
Production Company: Kasbah Films
Country: Morocco

In the heart of the Moroccan mountains, a land experiences the seasonal arrival of a tribe of shepherds, disrupted in winter by a foreign "tribe": skiers. The director, a former skier, revives her memories and delves into the hidden mysteries of this land.

LOOKING FOR THE MERMAID

Director: Yara Costa
Production Company: YC FILMS
Country: Mozambique

On an island off the Indian ocean, a fishermen married a mermaid and women chanted to the sea, following the tides, the winds and the moons. Now the disappearing mermaid has to be found before the island goes under water.

WE HAD THE MOON!

A chance encounter with Charlésia, an elderly Chagossian lady on a bus, leads Pamella, the Mauritian's filmmaker to devote a decade filming harrowing testimony from Chagossians forcibly evicted from their islands, to make way for the US/UK military base. This is one of the most shocking and shameful episodes of British colonial history.

Production Grant:

SPACEMAN IN KONGO

Director: Maisha Maene
Producers: Maisha Maene, Leo Nelki, Dale Dobson, Josune Hahnheiser
Production Company: Maene Film Production
Country: Democratic Republic of Congo

Two young rocket engineers, Nestor and Isaac, propelled by the memory of African dreamers and a resilient belief in their country, work on building the first Congolese Space Program.

THE WHITE DOCTOR

Director: Zippy Kimundu
Producers: Zippy Kimundu, Ciaran Cassidy
Production Companies: Afrofilms International, Little Wing Films
Country: Kenya

An American missionary stands accused of pretending to be a doctor in Uganda and being responsible for the deaths of over a hundred children.

Post-Production Grants:

COPPER QUEENS

Directors: Nyasha Kadandara, Sam Soko
Producer: Sam Soko
Production Companies: LBx Africa
Countries: Kenya

In their historic Women’s Soccer World Cup debut, Zambia’s Copper Queens, the lowest-ranked team in the tournament, overcome societal barriers and internal struggles, inspiring a nation and challenging conventions.

TRUCK MAMA

Director: Zipporah Nyaruri
Producers: Zipporah Nyaruri, Portia Cele
Production Companies: Visual Asili Limited, MoonBow Productions
Countries: Kenya, South Africa

A woman whose found freedom driving a 20-tonne truck across East Africa’s notorious highway—also known as “the Devil’s Highway”—is challenged when she gives birth to her youngest child.

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[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 31st annual edition from April 25 to May 5, 2024, in cinemas across Toronto. Since its inception in 1993, Hot Docs

has supported the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production fund portfolio, including the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund, CrossCurrents Doc Funds, Hot Docs-Slaight Family Fund, Hot Docs-Blue Ice Docs Fund and Hot Docs Partners, and valuable professional development programs, including Doc Ignite and Hot Docs Incubator.

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