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HOT DOCS FORUM 2023 WRAPS WITH OVER CAD 78,000 IN PRIZES AWARDED TO THREE PITCH TEAMS

Toronto, ON – Hot Docs is pleased to announce the winners of over CAD 78,000 at the 2023 edition of the Hot Docs Forum, the Festival’s acclaimed international co-financing market event, and the flagship industry event, including CAD 65,000 in *first look* Pitch Prizes, the CAD 10,000 CMF-Hot Docs Forum Canadian Pitch Prize, and CAD 3,000+ as well as goods and services donated by a room of observers in the Cuban Hat Award. The 2023 Hot Docs Forum was generously supported by Presenting Forum Sponsor the Directors Guild of Canada.

“It’s been an absolute joy to welcome this group of passionate and dedicated documentary creators to the 2023 Hot Docs Forum,” shared **Elizabeth Radshaw**, Hot Docs Industry Programs Director. “The Forum’s critical role as a space for innovative non-fiction projects to find investment is more evident than ever, and we look forward to seeing how this support will take these inspiring projects to the next level, maximizing their impact on audiences around the world.”

“The feeling of being together again after three online editions and years apart is incomparable. The energy in the room was absolutely electric,” said **Dorota Lech**, Hot Docs Forum Producer. “We’re so grateful to the artists who pitched in the 24th annual Hot Docs Forum and honoured to be a part of their filmmaking journeys. We can’t wait to welcome the documentary community back to Toronto next year!”

“The Directors Guild of Canada (DGC) is proud to represent Documentary Directors from coast-to-coast and offer our sincerest congratulations to all winners and participants in the 2023 Hot Docs Forum,” shared **Warren P. Sonoda**, President of the Directors Guild of Canada. “On the 30th anniversary of Hot Docs, the DGC joins in celebrating – and championing – the Canadian and international documentary filmmakers who bring these stories to light and touch our lives.”

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 50,000** went to ***I of the Water*** (D: Kimberlee Bassford | P: Kimberlee Bassford, Marilyn McFadyen, Vilsoni Hereniko, Leanne K. Ferrer, Cheryl Hirasa, Linda Goldstein Knowlton | Making Waves Films LLC (USA)), in which acclaimed Samoan writer Sia Figiel untangles her complicated past. The second prize of **CAD 15,000** was awarded to ***The Sandbox*** (D: Kenya-Jade Pinto | P: Shasha Nakhai, Kenya-Jade Pinto, Jennifer Baichwal, Rich Williamson | Compy Films Inc. (Canada)).

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 2023 CMF-Hot Docs Forum Canadian Pitch Prize was awarded to ***Intercepted*** (D: Oksana Karpovych | P: Giacomo Nudi, Rocío Barba Fuentes, Pauline Tran Van Lieu, Lucie Rego, Darya Bassel | Les Films Cosmos Inc. (Canada), Hutong Production (France), MoonMan (Ukraine)), a journey through Ukraine that reveals the banality of evil behind the Russian invasion.

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 2023 Award went to ***The Sandbox*** (D: Kenya-Jade Pinto | P: Shasha Nakhai, Kenya-Jade Pinto, Jennifer Baichwal, Rich Williamson | Compy Films Inc. (Canada)). 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 1,055.75, USD 377, € 27, MXN 5.00, 5 Egyptian Pounds, and a handful of other currencies including: British Pounds, Polish Zloty, Kenyan Shilling, Ugandan Shilling, Bosnia-Herzegovina Convertible Mark, Chilean Peso, Swedish Krona, Georgian Lari, Icelandic Króna, Indian Rupiah, Bulgarian Lev, and Iranian Rial. Hot Docs will match the total CAD and USD prize with the amount of CAD 1,500, bringing the total amount to **CAD 3,110.57**. The prize also included two All-Access Passes to Hot Docs 2024, two All-Access Passes to CPH:DOX, one IDFA Forum Pass, and a dinner with Hot Docs’ new president Marie Nelson.

Cuban Hat awarded the Best Decision Maker Award to Poh Si Teng from ABC News Studios.

At this year’s Hot Docs Forum, 20 projects—represented by 24 filmmakers, 11 of whom are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) and 12 of whom are women—representing 17 countries, were presented to a room of more than 50 key funders and decision makers as well as filmmakers, producers, and other observers. A total of 54 projects pitched in more than 900 pre-arranged meetings to more than 120 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 Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker, and additional industry content. Over 1800 registered delegates, including 158 decision makers, from more than 40 countries participated in this year’s live industry programs at Hot Docs. Hot Docs Industry featured: a Masterclass with Hot Docs 2023 Focus On honouree Elizabeth Klinck, a conversation with Oscar-winning producer Shane Boris (*Navalny*, *Fire of Love*); a conversation between Elizabeth Klinck and award-winning documentarian Jennifer Baichwal, two Works-in-Progress screenings, a panel on decolonized co-productions with Alethea Arnaquq-Baril and Stacey Aglok MacDonald (Producers, *Twice Colonized*), a session spotlighting the work of Ukrainian filmmakers, and five other sessions covering timely topics such as solidarity with Ukrainian filmmakers, equity in the industry, mental health, distribution and more. Ongoing industry events include a dynamic line-up of podcast-focussed industry panels and master classes, on until May 4, and the Hot Docs 2023 Awards Ceremony on Saturday, May 6. Hot Docs also hosted nine official delegations from: British Columbia, led by Canadian Media

Producers Association – BC; Chile, led by ChileDOC; Europe, led by Documentary Association of Europe; Germany, led by AG DOK; Italy, led by the Italian Trade Commission; Manitoba, led by OnScreen Manitoba; Nova Scotia, led by Lunenberg Doc Fest; Quebec, led by Société de Développement des Entreprises Culturelles (SODEC); and USA, led by Brown Girls Doc Mafia.

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

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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 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. In celebration of its 30th anniversary and a dedication to excellence in non-fiction storytelling, Hot Docs will present the Podcast Festival Showcase, featuring a slate of today's hottest podcasts live on stage; along with a dynamic line-up of industry panels and master classes featuring podcast game-changers. 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 cinema 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.



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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.

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

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