



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Regarding *of the North*

Montreal, November 26, 2015 – Following the two screenings of *of the North* by Dominic Gagnon at this year's Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM), the festival team received numerous complaints about the film and its inclusion in the festival. Without claiming to speak for the filmmaker, we take these reactions and comments very seriously and would like to issue the following statement.

For 18 years, the RIDM has annually presented more than 100 local and international documentaries. We have always sought to represent the diversity of perspectives, topics and approaches in the documentary genre. We strive to select works with original, relevant and unique approaches, with the aim of shedding light on urgent global and local issues. It is fundamental to the RIDM's mission that it present points of view that do not leave people indifferent to the people and stories presented on screen. Nevertheless, we do not aim to program works that are indefensible or simply provocative.

Far from seeing *of the North* as a racist work, it was programmed as a critical discourse on colonialism and its still devastating impacts, through a montage of images recorded and uploaded to YouTube by Inuit peoples. We believe that this film confronts stereotypes that have afflicted Inuit peoples.

Nevertheless, we are conscious of the harshness of the images in the film and sincerely regret the harm these images have had on members of the public. We recognize that we should have provided more context for the work and the filmmaker's approach, beyond the usual space we provide for the public to discuss works with filmmakers after each screening. We should have provided a better forum for conversation about this work to ensure an inclusive and respectful space for everyone to express their point of view on the film.

The debates sparked by this film are very important to us, and will inspire us to improve the framework in which we show the films we present.

- The administration of the RIDM

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