

RIDM announces opening and closing films

Montreal, Monday, October 3, 2016 – The **Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM)** is pleased to announce the films that will open and close the festival's 19th edition, taking place from November 10 to 20. ***Fire at sea*** by director **Gianfranco Rosi**, Golden Bear at the 2016 Berlinale, will kick off the festivities on Thursday, November 10. The festival will close with world premiere of ***Freelancer on the Front Lines*** by Quebec filmmaker **Santiago Bertolino**, a uniquely intimate look at the life of a freelance journalist covering the Middle East.

Opening Film – ***FIRE AT SEA***

Fire at sea focuses on the small Italian island of Lampedusa. For many years, it has been a reluctant symbol of the migrant crisis. A symbolic gateway to Europe, it is the inevitable landing point for many refugees trying to cross the Mediterranean on makeshift boats. Juxtaposing the work of an ordinary doctor haunted by seeing too many corpses, the carefree games of a young local boy and daily rescue operations, **Gianfranco Rosi** (*Sacro GRA*) throws contrasts into relief, taking an oblique approach that brings home the absurd tragedies of the present day as never before.

Winner of the Berlinale Golden Bear, ***Fire at sea*** has also been selected to represent Italy at the upcoming Oscars. The invitation-only screening Quebec premiere of ***Fire at sea*** will be presented in the original Italian version, with French subtitles. The screening will be held at Concordia University's SGWU Auditorium Alumni at 7 p.m. on **Thursday, November 10**. A second screening, open to the public, will take place during the festival. The film is presented in collaboration with Amnesty International Canada (French Branch).

Distributed by Eye Steel Film, ***Fire at sea*** will open on November 25 at Cinéma du Parc and on November 28 at the Cinémathèque québécoise.

Closing Film – ***FREELANCER ON THE FRONT LINES***

Jesse Rosenfeld, a young freelance journalist working with *The Daily Beast*, among other outlets, was fascinated by the Middle Eastern turmoil he had been covering since 2007. Over three years, through countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, **Santiago Bertolino** (*Carré rouge sur fond noir*) followed the always-alert reporter in his daily travels. From the struggle to publish important stories to making contacts with people at the heart of the events transforming the Middle East while trying to get around the front lines under fire, the filmmaker gained unique access to the workings and ideals of journalism in the age of Twitter and 24-hour news cycles. An essential film for anyone who wants to understand how the world's big stories are filtered by the written media.

Freelancer on the Front Lines will be presented in its original English and Arabic version, with French subtitles. **Santiago Bertolino** and **Jesse Rosenfeld** will attend this world premiere. The screening will be held at Concordia University's SGWU Auditorium Alumni at 7 p.m. on **Saturday, November 19**. Tickets for the closing night will go on sale from Wednesday, October 19.

Presented in collaboration with the National Film Board (NFB), a second screening, open to the public, will take place during the festival on November 20. Produced and distributed by the NFB, the film will open across Quebec in spring 2017.

Thank you to RIDM's partners

The RIDM is grateful for the support of its institutional and principal partners, sure to make this 19th edition of the festival a memorable one. Thanks to the Ministère de la culture et des communications, SODEC, the Secrétariat de la région métropolitaine, Telefilm Canada, the Ville de Montréal, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts de Montréal and Canadian Heritage, and Bell Media, the CSN, Canal D, the Canada Media Fund, FACTOR, Radio-Canada, Télé-Québec, Planète+, TV5 and Tourisme Montréal.

Quebec's only film festival dedicated to documentaries, the Montreal International Documentary Festival presents the best reality-based films, including the works of established directors and new talents.

The 19th edition of the RIDM will take place from November 10 to 20, 2016.

Information: www.ridm.ca / info@ridm.ca

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The RIDM's full program of more than 100 documentaries from Canada and around the world will be announced at a **PRESS CONFERENCE on Wednesday, October 19 at 10 a.m. at the Cinémathèque québécoise**. The line-up will be posted online the same day.

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