

DOCUMENTARIES - QUEBEC

ANIMAL MACULA

(24th edition) by **Sylvain L'Espérance**
Special Jury Prize, National Feature
82 minutes



Animal Macula is the result of in-depth archaeological work into the depiction of animals in world cinema over the past 125 years. From the bulk of this sometimes memorable and sometimes forgotten work, Sylvain L'Espérance provides a thoughtful compilation that highlights the complex, troubled, and often violent relationship between humans and animals. The masterful editing presents a sprawling network imbued with meaning, letting the images speak for themselves and interact freely with each other. With this fascinating film, L'Espérance continues a cinematic exploration that opens up new avenues in his work. Despite a tendency toward abstraction, the filmmaker seems increasingly anchored in reality, showcasing an admirably lucid creativity.

DEAR AUDREY

(24th edition) by **Jeremiah Hayes**
People's Choice Award - **89 minutes**
[Watch the trailer](#)



Martin Duckworth is a staunch defender of peace and justice and one of Quebec's most important documentary filmmakers. Helped by his 47-year-old daughter, who is on the autism spectrum, the octogenarian supports his wife, photographer and activist Audrey Schirmer, through the final stages of Alzheimer's disease. Characterized by captivating resilience and strength, this moving biography soberly directed by Jeremiah Hayes allows Duckworth to reflect candidly on the key personal and professional moments of the couple's lives. Dear Audrey tells a story marked by incredible twists and turns and a consistent attitude toward challenges. The film takes place more in the present than the past, becoming a powerful testimonial to the growing and unshakable love of a husband for his wife.

DEAR JACKIE

(24th edition) by **Henri Pardo**
Magnus Isacson Award - **90 minutes**
[Watch the trailer](#)



Dear Jackie is a cinematic letter to Jackie Robinson, the first Black man to play in Major League Baseball, after a stint with the minor-league Montreal Royals, and a key contributor to the civil rights movement in the United States. The film addresses Robinson directly and recounts the current situation of the Black community in Little Burgundy, once known as the "Harlem of the North," drawing interesting parallels between the two eras. Through eloquent interviews, the filmmaker paints a portrait of racism and racial inequality in Montreal and Quebec as a whole. Presenting a unique historical and social perspective, Henri Pardo has made an important film that deconstructs the myth of a post-racial Quebec society.

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GABOR

(24th edition) by **Joannie Lafrenière**
Closing Film - **101 minutes**

[Watch the trailer](#)



The first documentary feature by Joannie Lafrenière paints a tender and light-hearted portrait of her friend, the talented photographer Gabor Szilasi. Structured around a number of interviews, notably one between the filmmaker and the energetic, eloquent, insightful and inspiring man himself. This intimate and unconventional documentary revisits the career and personal history of a remarkably creative nonagenarian with a fascinating life story. The film is a journey through the past that remains firmly anchored in the present, much like the photographer himself, who passionately continues to capture the poetry of daily life in his adopted homeland as he has done over the past six decades.

ZO REKEN

(24th edition) by **Emanuel Licha**
Grand Prize, National Feature &
Student Jury Award - **86 minutes**

[Watch the trailer](#)



The winner of the Best Canadian Feature Documentary Award at Hot Docs, this work by Montreal filmmaker Emanuel Licha looks at the powerful 4x4 vehicles that have proliferated in Haiti, and the privileged position they symbolize. The vehicle – nicknamed zo reken by locals – is used by the many NGOs that have appeared in Haiti since the 2010 earthquake; in this film, it becomes a space for Haitians’ voices to be heard. While the driver attempts to navigate the many obstacles, as well as the restive people in the street, conversations inside the car give a compelling account of the country and denounce the neocolonial and paternalistic nature of the white “saviour” figure.

NO ORDINARY MAN

(23th edition) by **Aisling Chin-Yee & Chase Joynt** - New Visions Award -
80 minutes - [Watch the trailer](#)



When he died in 1989, American jazz musician Billy Tipton sparked a scandal when it was revealed that the dedicated husband and father was a trans man. As a counterpoint to the many television programs and even an authorized biography that relentlessly portrayed Tipton as manipulative, this creative documentary co-directed by Aisling Chin-Yee and Chase Joynt ably combines historical research and a unique audition process in which trans actors play Tipton, as a way to put their current condition into perspective. Asking relevant, incisive questions about the representation and treatment of trans people by the media and society at large, this lively film does long-overdue justice to a man who was able to live a fulfilling life despite the time, while reflecting on today’s challenges.

DOCUMENTARIES - OUTSIDE QUEBEC

KÍMMAPIIYIPITSSINI : THE MEANING OF EMPATHY

(24th edition) by **Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers**
Canada - 124 minutes

[Watch the trailer](#)



In Canada, opioid overdoses and prescription drug poisoning cause the deaths of over a dozen people every day. In this important and inspiring film, filmmaker and actor Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers sensitively turns the camera on her own community, the Kainai First Nation, to highlight its innovative and empathetic approach to confronting this public health crisis and healing the wounds caused by colonialism. Emphasizing the humanity and strength of people suffering from addiction and the dedication of countless healthcare workers, this feature convincingly demonstrates the benefits of developing a concerted strategy focused on harm reduction.

JUST A MOVEMENT

(24th edition) by **Vincent Meessen**
Belgium, France - 110 minutes

[Watch the trailer](#)



In 1967, Omar Blondin Diop “played” a Maoist militant in *La Chinoise*, a prescient political film directed by Jean-Luc Godard. A few years later, in 1973, the Senegalese intellectual and Marxist activist was found dead in prison in Senegal. The circumstances surrounding his death were, at the very least, ambiguous. In a complex work that blurs boundaries between documentary and essay, *Just a Movement* revisits Omar’s story from multiple perspectives, with interviewees sharing in the (de)construction of a deeply moving series of events. A profound work in which present and past are intertwined, just as fiction merges with the polyphonic truth. In this fascinating personal quest informed by Godard’s film, Vincent Meessen explores how creativity, politics, and memory interact.

THE KIOSK

(24th edition) by **Alexandra Pianelli**
France - 78 minutes

[Watch the trailer](#)



Parisian filmmaker and visual artist Alexandra Pianelli lends her mother a hand by working in the newspaper kiosk her family has owned for generations. From her post behind the counter, Alexandra invites us behind the scenes of a business destined for obsolescence, her cellphone camera providing a glimpse of a tiny space that seems to encapsulate the life of an entire neighbourhood. In this private world, we meet the customers that give the shop its unique character, while the kiosk itself appears as an essential component of the social fabric of the 16th arrondissement. Alexandra pieces together a documentary that, while unsentimental, records the end of an era with humour and sensitivity.

DOCUMENTARIES PROPOSAL BEYOND THE FEST

DOCUMENTARIES - OUTSIDE QUEBEC

WRITING WITH FIRE

(24th edition) by **Sushmit Ghosh & Rintu Thomas** - India - 93 minutes

[Watch the trailer](#)



Khabar Lahariya was a newspaper published thanks to the courage and passion of women in the Dalit community, a group that suffers significant discrimination in India. In 2016, the women decide to abandon the publication of their printed newspaper to dedicate themselves to producing journalistic videos. The filmmakers document this transition, highlighting the new skills the women must learn and the challenges they face. Despite these complications, the decision allowed a once-minor publication to reach a massive audience, with some of the videos gaining millions of views. Highlighting the perspective of women who are determined to reveal the reality of modern-day India through their news coverage, *Writing with Fire* illustrates the important impact of the democratization of journalism. **Academy Award Nominee.**

ASCENSION

(24th edition) by **Jessica Kingdon**
United States - 98 minutes

[Watch the trailer](#)



Awarded Best Documentary Feature at the Tribeca Film Festival, *Ascension* casts an ironic gaze on a number of unusual elements in contemporary Chinese society. While shedding light on the absurdity of the capitalist rat race, the film first presents the realities of workers in hazardous factories before turning its attention to the social ladder and finally focusing on the ostentatious spectacle of the elite who aspire to the most vapid of Western trappings. With a well-placed camera and remarkable editing work that transforms the images into a sort of symphony, Chinese-American filmmaker Jessica Kingdon delivers an incredible first feature that is a fascinating chronicle of the Chinese Dream and its dangerous implications for the future. **Academy Award Nominee.**

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