



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate distribution

The RIDM introduces its new executive director

Montreal, Wednesday, March 25, 2020 – Despite exceptional circumstances, the board of directors of the **Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM)** and **Forum RIDM** is pleased to announce the appointment of **Sofia Laroussi** to the position of executive director for both organizations. This week, Ms. Laroussi and her predecessor, **Mara Gourd-Mercado**, started the transition process remotely. The transition will continue until April 3, 2020, Ms. Gourd-Mercado's final day with the organization. This process will ensure the RIDM's stability and the protection of its institutional memory. The RIDM and Forum RIDM will be in capable hands, thanks to Ms. Laroussi's extensive experience in both film and funding. She will bring a breath of fresh air, while also being an excellent fit for the RIDM's artistic and political values.

Throughout her career, **Sofia Laroussi** has shown a keen interest in social justice issues. After working in political communications, she shifted to managing socially impactful projects. She is particularly interested in activism education and citizen participation. With several years of experience as a funding and business development manager with the Fondation Fabienne Colas (Montreal International Black Film Festival), which promotes cultural diversity in film, she has developed a deep understanding of the realities and challenges affecting cultural events, particularly film festivals.

"I am very excited to be joining the RIDM as executive director, and delighted to be part of such an experienced and dynamic team. I know that together, we will meet all the challenges facing this 23rd edition and keep fulfilling the RIDM's unique mission," said Ms. Laroussi.

Ms. Laroussi succeeds **Mara Gourd-Mercado**, who has held the position since April 2015. During her tenure, Mara has diversified the RIDM's and Forum RIDM's areas of activity, helping build solid financial foundations for both events. Under her leadership, the festival and the professional market saw exponential growth in their attendance while developing a clear, inclusive direction that have made them leaders in equity and representativeness.

"The Board is thrilled to welcome **Sofia Laroussi** as the RIDM's new Executive Director. Sofia is a passionate advocate of documentary films and the art form's ability to unite, educate and effect change. She has spent years working towards inclusivity in the film industry and is a tireless champion of this country's under-represented talent. We are excited to bring Sofia's commitment to filmmakers and the power of documentary into the heart of the festival. Sofia will be a dynamic and inspiring ambassador of the RIDM's ever-growing role at home and abroad.

The Board has identified Sofia as a natural continuation of **Mara Gourd-Mercado's** exemplary mandate, which earned her the respect and admiration not only of the Board and her entire team but of the documentary industry as a whole. Mara's leadership broadened filmmakers' horizons and grew the festival while remaining true to the RIDM's core mandate to be a creatively audacious encounter of documentary's most innovative art and experimentation," says **Sarah Spring**, chair of the RIDM board.

Bruno Dequen, the festival's artistic director since 2015, and **Selin Murat**, programming director for Forum RIDM since 2017, remain in charge of their respective divisions. With renewed energy, they are taking on the challenge of assembling another pair of exceptional programs for this fall's 23rd RIDM.

About RIDM

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.

About Forum RIDM

Forum RIDM, the documentary forum organized in parallel with the festival, hosts a dozen activities for documentary professionals, including workshops and presentations, and facilitates more than 1,500 business meetings. The industry market will take place from November 14 to 18, 2020.

The 23rd annual RIDM will take place from November 12 to 22, 2020.

Information: ridm.ca / info@ridm.ca

[Facebook](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Instagram](#)

- 30 -

For interview or visual material requests, please contact:

Caroline Rompré | pixellex communications | 514-778-9294 | caroline@pixellex.ca