



RENCONTRES INTERNATIONALES
DU DOCUMENTAIRE DE MONTRÉAL
MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montreal International Documentary Festival 2015 Programming

Montreal, Tuesday, October 20, 2015 – The 18th annual Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM) will be held from November 12 to 22. With **144 films** from **42 countries** and more than a hundred guests, the RIDM is, more than ever, an essential destination for anyone who appreciates reality-based cinema.

The festival will present **25 world and international premieres, 23 North American premieres, 23 Canadian premieres** and **43 Quebec premieres**. With **49 short and feature films from Quebec**, the RIDM is once again proving itself to be a fine launch platform for local works.

The RIDM is very pleased to open the festival with the world premiere of the new film by Pascal Sanchez, ***Les vaillants***. A proud standard-bearer for Quebec's long tradition of direct cinema, this immersion in the life of a public housing project in Montreal's Saint-Michel neighbourhood is a profoundly compassionate work that goes straight to the heart. To close the festival, the RIDM presents one of the most original and acclaimed films of the festival season. Straddling the line between fiction and documentary, ***Olmo and the Seagull*** by Petra Costa and Lea Glob takes us inside the lives of an actor couple whose routine is disrupted by pregnancy. A luminous work about the links between life and creativity.

OFFICIAL COMPETITION

There are **eleven awards** for films in **four competitive sections**.

International Feature Competition

The ten films in the international feature competition are a strong, diverse group that collectively reflect the vitality of the documentary genre and its unique ability to take the pulse of the world as it is.

The masterful, epic yet intimate ***Homeland (Iraq Year Zero)***, the family chronicle ***I Am the People*** and the unsettling interior drama ***Coma*** transform our perception of the disastrous invasion of Iraq, the complexity of the Egyptian revolution and the current situation in Syria respectively; all important lessons in humanity. Meanwhile, ***Democrats*** is a gripping political thriller, in which we see the ins and outs of the drafting of Zimbabwe's new constitution – a task at once enormous, dangerous and futile. Closer to home, the docu-fictional film ***The Other Side*** is an unnerving excursion into "white trash" culture in the U.S. Deep South.

While these films are grounded in the present, documentary cinema can also be an unparalleled tool for thinking about and revisiting history. Whether it is an original and unusual take on the legacy of a mad English poet (***By Our Selves***), science fiction and poetics used as devices to explore Singapore's collective memory (***Snakeskin***), the World Cup in Brazil as an opportunity to renew long-broken family ties (***O futebol***), a brilliant investigation of the roots of the most infamous German terrorist group of the 1960s and 70s (***A German Youth***), or a revisiting of the history of political repression in Los Angeles in the form of a tormented love letter (***Machine Gun or Typewriter?***), these documentaries defy convention to arrive at a different grasp of the world.

Canadian Feature Competition

The many different approaches taken in the 12 films in the Canadian feature competition are very much in the same league as their international counterparts, demonstrating convincingly that Quebec and the rest of Canada boast an enviable group of talented documentarians.

Anticipated films by established artists such as André-Line Beauparlant (*Pinocchio*), Dominic Gagnon (*of the North*), Mia Donovan (*Deprogrammed*), Jean-François Lesage (*A Summer Love*) and Michka Saäl (*Spoon*) will compete with promising first features by bold young filmmakers. After winning the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance for her fictional short *La coupe*, Geneviève Dulude-De Celles has made an excellent chronicle of today's youth with *Bienvenue à F.L.* In *Nuestro Monte Luna*, Pablo Alvarez-Mesa closely observes young Colombians with a passion for bullfighting, confronted with much larger socio-political issues. That same openness to foreign subjects is seen in many films in this competition that do not hesitate to turn their cameras to the world outside our borders, including *After Circus*, *Callshop Istanbul*, *P.S. Jerusalem* and the idiosyncratic and hilarious *Jesus Town, USA*. In a category all its own, the highly unusual *88:88* by Isiah Medina, the talk of Locarno and TIFF, is nothing less than reinvented cinema for tomorrow. It all adds up to a truly exciting program!

International Short and Medium-length Competitions

These competitions boast a particularly strong contingent of filmmakers from Quebec and the rest of Canada. Loïc Darses (*elle pis son char*), Nika Khanjani (*Free World Pens*), Nadine Gomez (*Métro*) and the leading light of Quebec's experimental cinema scene, Karl Lemieux, with his regular collaborator David Bryant (*Quiet Zone*), will compete with international masters like Lucien Castaing-Taylor, Véréna Paravel and Ernst Karel (the team behind *Leviathan*), returning with *Ah Humanity!*, an apocalyptic vision of our industrial world filmed in Japan using a smartphone and a telescope; and the acclaimed composer Jóhann Jóhannsson (*The Theory of Everything*, *Sicario*), whose *End of Summer* is a visual symphony set in the Antarctic. That line-up might risk overshadowing the eight medium-length films in competition, but that will not happen thanks to *Bring Me the Head of Tim Horton*, a caustic new film by Guy Maddin and Evan and Galen Johnson; *Psaume*, a post-apocalyptic African odyssey by Nicolas Boone (winner of the short film competition at the FNC in 2014 for *Hillbrow*); or *Field Niggas*, an unforgettable first film by New York street photographer Khalik Allah. Expect a fiercely contested battle for these awards!

PANORAMA

Special Presentations

As usual, the biggest names and most prestigious works of the festival season will be shown as **Special Presentations**. With *In Transit* and *Last Conversations*, the late film giants Albert Maysles and Eduardo Coutinho offer final works that testify eloquently to their talent for capturing the soul of the American people and Brazilian youth, respectively. Chantal Akerman, who passed away very recently, made a final tribute to her mother with *No Home Movie*. The winner of the award for best documentary at the Cannes Festival this year, *Allende mi abuelo Allende*, directed by the granddaughter of the deposed Chilean president, is an unprecedented personal exploration of the man behind the legend. Frederick Wiseman explores one of New York City's most culturally diverse neighbourhoods with *In Jackson Heights*; Patricio Guzmán returns with *Le bouton de nacre*, a new philosophical and political essay on Chilean history; Sergei Loznitsa revisits the fall of the USSR in *The Event*; Claire Simon turns her sympathetic, humane gaze on Paris's Bois de Vincennes in *The Woods Dreams Are Made Of*; and Nikolaus Geyrhalter presents an epic of daily life with *Over the Years*. The fine line-up also includes *Censored Voices*, a hard-hitting work that, for the first time, reveals the long-censored testimonials of Israeli soldiers recorded shortly after the Six-Day War and *Guantanamo's Child: Omar Khadr*, the first film to give full voice to the high-profile recently paroled prisoner. Lastly, contemporary artist Mark Lewis invites us, with *Invention*, on a captivating exploration of the connections between cities and architecture.

Report on Quebec

Major social issues facing Quebec are examined thoroughly in *Report on Quebec*. The victims of recent reforms to the employment insurance program finally have their say in *Pouding chômeurs*; while *Police Académie* takes us behind the scenes of the final year of police training; controversial pipeline projects and the fight to stop them are explored in *Pipelines, pouvoir et démocratie*; and *Maman ? Non merci !* introduces us to people who are pushing back against social pressure to have children. Lastly, the beautiful *Manoir* is a chronicle of the final days of a unique homeless shelter.

The State of the Planet

International socio-political issues are the focus of **The State of the Planet**. The intense *Tell Spring Not To Come This Year* is an immersion in an Afghani army unit fighting against the Taliban; the contemplative *Killing Time – Entre deux fronts* takes a look at the lives of American soldiers stationed, between deployments, in the small desert town of Twentynine Palms, California; *À la poursuite de la paix* focuses on activists who venture into war zones to try to change the course of conflicts. The everyday reality of psychiatric work is exposed in *Le divan du monde*, and *Oncle Bernard, l'anti-leçon d'économie* is a new opportunity to revisit the wisdom of the famous *Charlie Hebdo* economic analyst who was assassinated last winter. Finally, *The Chinese Mayor* shows us the intricacies of Chinese municipal politics through a profile of an extraordinary politician.

ARTifice

Artistic creation is the subject of the **ARTifice** section: drawing on the fundamental essence of documentary to observe the birth of a bronze sculpture in *Hand Gestures*; the story of FONKI, a talented Montreal-based graffiti artist who returns to his native Cambodia in *Retour aux sources*; portraits of two exceptional filmmakers in *I Don't Belong Anywhere – Le cinéma de Chantal Akerman* and *The 1000 Eyes of Dr. Maddin*; rediscovering one of the most influential patrons of modern art in *Peggy Guggenheim – Art Addict*; searching for a legendary Québécois illustrator in *Sur les traces d'Arthur*; and exposing the workings of one of the biggest literary scandals of recent years with *The Cult of JT Leroy*. Even Ronald and Nancy Reagan become unwitting performance artists in the hilarious *Reagan Shorts*.

Portraits

The documentary form is often used to tell compelling human-scale stories. The **Portraits** section examines individual lives in all their poignancy and universal appeal. *My Love, Don't Cross That River* is a heartbreaking story of boundless love between an elderly Korean couple; *Night Is Fading* documents a reconciliation between a father, his son and Algerian history; *La fiancée du Nil* is a sensitive look at the private tragedy of a young Egyptian woman betrothed to a stranger; *Lleivate mis amores* is a portrait of exceptional Mexican women who have dedicated their lives to feeding migrants risking everything to reach the United States; and *Star*Men* documents a reunion of aging astronomers who are every bit as passionate as they were in their youth.

Beat Dox

This year, the festival's section dedicated to music-themed documentaries presents five films with completely different styles and subjects. While *They Will Have to Kill Us First* and *Yallah ! Underground* invite us to witness the courage of Malian musicians and of the young artists of the Arab Spring, *Imagine Waking Up Tomorrow and All Music Has Disappeared* follows Bill Drummond, a true English eccentric and former pop idol, as he wanders England's byways in search of ordinary sounds for a universal symphony. Meanwhile, *Breaking a Monster* and *I'm Gone: A film About Amy* cover the two extremes of a musical career: on the one hand a metal band that achieved fame and fortune before any member reached puberty, and on the other the perseverance of a Montreal folk artist who has seen and survived everything.

UXdoc

The documentary genre knows no boundaries with **UXdoc**, which presents seven projects combining gaming, cinema and cutting-edge digital technology. Once again this year, the subject matter is as fascinating as it is diverse: privacy under siege in the digital age (*Do Not Track*), the intricacies of a volcanic eruption (*En attendant Bárðarbunga*), personal connections made online (*Highrise – Universe Within*), a very special hotel (*Love Hotel*), the lot of Syrian refugees (*Life on Hold*), the First World War (*Le photographe inconnu*) and melting Arctic ice (*Polar Sea 360°*).

RETROSPECTIVES

Thom Andersen

This year the festival will celebrate the career of Thom Andersen, one of North America's most influential documentary filmmakers. A leading figure in the essay genre, Andersen has twin passions for the history of cinema

and architecture, as exemplified by his revered film *Los Angeles Plays Itself*. He will give a guest lecture on the topic at the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

A Photographer's Eye: photography and the poetic documentary

The festival has invited the filmmaking and photography team of Melanie Shatzky and Brian M. Cassidy (*The Patron Saints, Francine*) to program a series of documentaries made by important photographers, or films whose aesthetic is grounded in still photography. The 20 titles in this retrospective will illustrate the fascinating relationships between still and moving pictures. The selection includes famous names in photography and cinema such as Helen Levitt, Ed van der Elsken, William Klein, Agnès Varda, Chris Marker, Johan van der Keuken, Harun Farocki, JH Engström, Roger Ballen, Richard Billingham, Ulrich Seidl and Jem Cohen (who will present his new film, *Counting*), and illustrious Canadian artists including Arthur Lipsett, Guy Borremans, Michel Lamothe and Donigan Cumming.

ONLINE COMPETITION

During the festival, Télé-Québec will webcast, on La Fabrique culturelle, a program of short films put together specially by the RIDM programming team. From November 5 to 15, a competition will be held (*La Fabrique culturelle et les RIDM craquent pour les courts*) in which the public can view a selection of six Quebec-made short films on lafabriqueculturelle.tv. Viewers will vote for their favourite film, and the winner will receive the Prix Fabrique culturelle de Télé-Québec, which includes a \$500 prize.

PARALLEL ACTIVITIES

The RIDM is organizing a large number of parallel activities to accompany the film program. Guest lectures, round tables, screenings followed by debates, concerts and interactive installations will add colour to the festival's 11 days.

Discussions

Composer Jóhann Jóhannsson, winner of the Golden Globe for best original score for *The Theory of Everything* and a frequent collaborator of Denis Villeneuve's, will give a special presentation on film music composition.

Two round tables will reveal the workings of **sound design** for documentary and explore the rich and complex links between **documentary film and still photography**.

Two **debates** on public affairs will follow screenings of *Pipelines, pouvoir et démocratie* (on the many forms of citizen activism) and *Maman ? Non merci !* (on rethinking parenthood as an ideal).

Special screenings

In addition to the final film by Chantal Akerman and the documentary about her, the RIDM and the Cinémathèque québécoise are presenting *De l'autre côté* (2002), a documentary by Akerman about Mexican migrants in the United States.

Up-and-coming Quebec talents will be showcased at the **Soirée de la relève Radio-Canada**, hosted by Patrick Masbourian, where 11 shorts by promising young local filmmakers will be screened. The same event will also feature **Intersections**, the webdoc project produced by the RIDM with students from Amos high school in Montréal-Nord.

As part of its collaboration with the festival, Radio-Canada will present a program called **Les nuits du documentaire** on November 6, 7 and 8, at midnight on the Explora channel, at 11:30 p.m. on ICI Radio-Canada Télé and at midnight on ARTV, to whet audiences' appetite for the RIDM. In addition, 10 favourite documentaries will be selected and featured on Tou.tv throughout the month of November.

Families are also invited to discover two programs of films for all audiences aged 6 and up, programmed by Marcel Jean of the Cinémathèque québécoise, to initiate young people to documentaries and expose them to some of the greatest films in the history of cinema.

The RIDM will also renew its collaboration with the **Visions** series by presenting a program of experimental films by Isiah Medina and Nicolas Boone.

Lastly, for the first time the RIDM will present a **public listening session**, a spellbinding experience, without images, where sounds create their own shapes and spark the imagination. The audio piece *Cargo* by Sophie Berger will kick off this new initiative.

Installations

The **UXdoc Space**, located in Norman McLaren Hall at the Cinémathèque québécoise, will be home to the works in the festival's UXdoc section as well as the webdoc portion of the RIDM's Young Audiences program. Now in its fourth year, UXdoc is back with a strong slate of interactive projects, installations and virtual reality works that demonstrate interesting new narrative possibilities in documentary.

An **installation by Montreal-based artist Donigan Cumming** and the audio installation **Dia_log/Dialogue** by artist Simon-Pierre Gourd will be exhibited at the RIDM Headquarters; an **exhibition of photographs** by filmmaker and street photographer **Khalik Allah** (*Field Niggas*) will be on display in the Excentris atrium for the duration of the festival; and the lower level of RIDM Headquarters will host **Days in Night**, a video installation by **Thomas Kneubühler** on the polar night.

The RIDM will also present an original interactive installation in Place Pasteur and on the Promenade des Artistes: the Gifoscopes, inspired by the praxinoscope, an optical device invented by Émile Reynaud in the late 19th century and by today's popular animated GIFs.

Musical program

In parallel with the **Beat Dox** section of music-themed documentaries, the **Beat Dox Sessions** will take place every evening at RIDM Headquarters. The program, put together in partnership with local music-industry leaders such as Heavy Trip, Pop Montreal, Suoni per Il Popolo and M pour Montréal, will feature local artists including Mozart's Sister, No Family, Gold Zebra, Perverted Justice and more.

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.*

The 18th edition of the RIDM will take place from November 12 to 22, 2015 at Cinéma du Parc, Cinéma Excentris, Cinémathèque québécoise, Concordia University, Pavillon Judith-Jasmin Annexe and RIDM Headquarters (3450 St. Urbain Street).

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