

For Immediate Release

CHRIS MCDONALD AND ALETHEA ARNAQUQ-BARIL RECEIVE AWARDS AT DOC INSTITUTE HONOURS CELEBRATION THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2016 AT THE GLADSTONE HOTEL IN TORONTO

(Toronto, ON – DEC. 8)

DOC Institute bestowed their top honours to Hot Docs President **Chris McDonald** and documentary filmmaker **Alethea Arnaquq-Baril**, tonight at the 2016 DOC Institute Honours. This annual awards celebration commemorates visionary work within the Canadian documentary field. This year, a jury of industry peers unanimously selected McDonald to win the Rogers-DOC Luminary Award and Arnaquq-Baril to win the DOC Vanguard Award.

The **Rogers-DOC Luminary Award**, supported by the Rogers Group of Funds, is presented to an individual who embodies the creative spirit of the Canadian documentary tradition and supports the next generation of doc-makers through mentorship. 2016 winner **Chris McDonald** was recognized for his pivotal role in support of Canada's documentary industry, while serving for over 15 years as Executive Director and now President at the Hot Docs International Documentary Festival. In this time, McDonald has overseen the growth of the Festival from modest beginnings into what is now recognized as North America's largest documentary festival.

"I am incredibly proud to support filmmakers whose life goal is to tell important stories from all over the world, and am genuinely grateful to organizations like the DOC Institute for championing this art form." said McDonald. "I am honoured and extremely touched by this recognition."

"Over the past 15 years, Hot Docs has skyrocketed to global prominence both among audiences and industry," said Adam Shamoan, DOC Institute Director. "The festival has launched countless Canadian films on the global stage. We are thrilled to celebrate Chris's vital role in cementing Canada's reputation as a frontrunner in documentary."

The **DOC Vanguard Award** is presented to an emerging or mid-career professional, who demonstrates a keen artistic sensibility and forward-thinking approach to the craft, with the potential to lead the next generation of doc-makers. 2016 winner **Alethea Arnaquq-Baril's** most recent film, **Angry Inuk**, follows a generation of tech-savvy Inuit as they challenge long-established perceptions of seal hunting. The audience pick at Hot Docs taps into the global conversation about sustainability and the environment, providing a crucial perspective with nuance, warmth, and complexity. Arnaquq-Baril's previous directing credits include **Tunniit: Retracing the Lines of Inuit Tattoos** and **Inuit Highkick**. An Inuit filmmaker from the Canadian arctic, Arnaquq-Baril runs Unikkaat Studios Inc., where she has collaborated with some of Canada's documentary masters, including, Daniel Cross, Peter Rayment, and John Walker.

In response to earning the award, Arnaquq-Baril said, "I am astonished to be receiving the DOC Vanguard Award from the DOC Institute, and will do my best to live up to your grand expectations of my career. A heartfelt thank you goes to all my mentors past, present and future. I only hope I can take your generosity and pay it forward someday."

“The DOC Institute, by providing professional development, invests in the future of documentary and ensures that filmmakers have the support to continue their work. It is all the more important to uphold strong, creative voices, like Alethea, who are poised to lead this genre,” said Michael McMahon, Co-Chair of DOC Toronto.

The 2016 Honours were presented at a ceremony December 1 at the DOC Institute Honours Celebration at the Gladstone Hotel in Toronto.

“The DOC Institute Honours continue to be an important venue for industry professionals to highlight the exciting work that is occurring inside this field. DOC and the DOC Institute provide a necessary hub for filmmakers to connect and celebrate the groundbreaking work being done in Canada,” said Connie Edwards, Chair of DOC.

The DOC Institute Honours were selected by a peer jury from nominations submitted by members of the Documentary Organization of Canada, an association of over 700 filmmakers, craftspeople, and production companies from across the country.

About the Documentary Organization of Canada:

The Documentary Organization of Canada/l’Association des documentaristes du Canada (DOC) is the voice of Canada’s independent documentary creators. DOC champions the production and distribution of documentaries across all platforms; advocates on behalf of creators and producers; and connects and strengthens the Canadian documentary community. For more information about DOC please visit: www.docorg.ca.

About the DOC Institute:

The DOC Institute is an initiative of the Documentary Organization of Canada, Toronto Chapter. The DOC Institute develops and leads programs to help documentary creators succeed at every stage of their careers. Offering creative inspiration and insider advice, DOC Institute is a hub for the non-fiction community. For more information about the DOC Institute and the Awards go to: www.docinstitute.com

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