

## EyeSteelFilm's Daniel Cross and Filmmaker Victoria Lean Scoop Top Documentary Awards at DOC Institute Honours

(Toronto, ON – December 7) Tonight, the Canadian documentary community singles out renowned EyeSteelFilm founder **Daniel Cross** and filmmaker **Victoria Lean** to win the top prizes at DOC Institute Honours. The annual awards gala celebrates the visionary work and growing global appetite for Canadian documentary. This year, a jury of peers unanimously voted to recognize Cross for the Rogers-DOC Luminary Award and Lean for the DOC Vanguard Award.

The **Rogers-DOC Luminary Award**, supported by the Rogers Group of Funds, is presented to a leader in independent Canadian documentary, who works to secure the industry for future generations of filmmakers.

In a year where the politics of borders has become increasingly perilous, Emmy-winning director/producer Daniel Cross continues to seek international stories with global storytellers, creating partnerships in Asia, Europe, and elsewhere. The co-founder of EyeSteelFilm, which was named a Realscreen “Global 100” Company, Cross is a fierce champion for independent documentary in Canada and abroad.

“Daniel Cross is a fearless visionary in the truest sense of the words,” says Adam Shamoan, DOC Institute Director. “With projects like *Up The Yangtze*, *Angry Inuk*, and *Last Train Home*, he has given outspoken young Canadian filmmakers a vital international platform.”

“Luminary – that’s a powerful word, and to be recognized by my peers within the Documentary Organization of Canada is a great honor,” Cross says. “Right now, it is crucial for documentary makers, in solidarity, to be vigilant and assertive both with our films and our actions, challenging power imbalances that cause hurt and injustice.”

The **DOC Vanguard Award** is given to an emerging or mid-career filmmaker, whose bold storytelling sensibility and forward-thinking approach to documentary showcases a potential to innovate the form, and lead the next generation of non-fiction storytellers.

Before the Attawapiskat community came into the national spotlight in 2016, filmmaker Victoria Lean spent five years documenting the remote reserve for her acclaimed film *After The Last River*. The film tracks the community as it moves from crisis to crisis, all while living under the shadow of De Beers’ Victor diamond mine. It’s an urgent meditation on the devastating environmental impact that resource extraction can wreak upon land and community. The documentary premiered in fall of 2015. It was announced this fall that Attawapiskat’s Victor diamond mine closes its doors in 2019 for good

In addition to her own work, Lean produces Viceland's show *Nirvana the Band the Show*, and leads filmmaking workshops in Northern communities.

In response to winning the award, Lean said, "I am deeply honoured to be recognized by the DOC Institute with the 2017 Vanguard Award. I could not have made my first feature without the guidance and support of so many mentors, colleagues and friends in the documentary community and in Attawapiskat. This award will certainly be an important source of encouragement for me as I embark on future filmmaking endeavours."

"At a time when the public is turning to documentary for compelling, journalistic stories, DOC Institute plays a vital role in ensuring the future of the genre," says Michael McMahon, Co-Chair of DOC Toronto. "It helps young filmmakers like Victoria find sure footing and a home for their films."

The 2017 Honours will be presented as part of DOC Institute's annual gala, which brings together the luminaries of the documentary world under one roof. Returning this year to helm the festivities is *Murdoch Mysteries*' actor Peter Keleghan, a passionate arts advocate and documentary producer in his own right. The celebration will take place at the historic Gladstone Hotel in Toronto, with CBC as the Presenting Partner and Steam Whistle Brewing as the Official Beer Sponsor.

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 750 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) will be celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> year as 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. This year, DOC will roll out special activities to commemorate its influence on the documentary industry.

[www.docorg.ca](http://www.docorg.ca)

#### **About the DOC Institute:**

The DOC Institute is an initiative of 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:

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