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## Don't Look Away!

Be part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Montreal Human Rights Film Festival  
March 27 to April 3, 2008 at the Cinema du Parc and the NFB Cinema

[www.ffdp.com](http://www.ffdp.com) / [www.cinemaduparc.com](http://www.cinemaduparc.com) / [www.onf.ca/cinerobotheque](http://www.onf.ca/cinerobotheque)

Tickets \$7

Montreal, Wednesday March 12, 2008 – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Montreal Human Rights Film Festival (MHRFF) presented by **Images Interculturelles**, runs at the **Cinema du Parc** and the **NFB Cinema** from **March 27** through **April 3, 2008** in Montreal. It will also host the closing event in the 9<sup>th</sup> **Action Week Against Racism (AWAR)**. The 3<sup>rd</sup> MHRFF honours the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the founding document of the modern human rights movement.

Like festivals in other great cities including New York, Paris, Prague, London, and Geneva, the MHRFF, a member of the *Human Rights Film Network*, presents dynamic, diversified, socially and politically engaged films to remind us that human rights and freedoms are under constant threat, and to invite us to denounce violations of respect for human dignity.

The 2008 Festival offers **60 films** (chosen from among 350 submissions) from **21 countries** – 11 fiction films, 45 documentaries, 4 animation films, 27 shorts, 15 television format and 18 feature-length films – in a program organized by Coordinator **Diya Angeli** and **Monique Lortie**.

The **Official International Selection** (screening at Cinema du Parc) brings together **51 films** in competition for the Audience Award, with 9 in competition for the MHRFF Documentary Grand Prize. New this year, the **Official Quebec Selection** (screening at the NFB Cinema) salutes the work of Quebec filmmakers engaged with the social issues of their time; it features **9 recent documentaries** produced and made here. Most screenings will be followed by a discussion with guest filmmakers, rights advocates and experts speaking on the topics raised in the films.

Another first this year – 4 films in the Official Selection will be screened, April 1st and 2nd, at the Musée de la Civilisation in Quebec City.

### THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MONTREAL HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL: DIGNITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

The stories in this year's films are designed both to move us and to shake us out of our comfort zones. They are also gestures of solidarity, offered by "conscientious objectors trying to find different ways of looking at the issues we find disturbing and to give a voice to people whom hardship has condemned to silence." (Raymonde Provencher)

The filmmakers featured at the MHRFF are passionate advocates for freedom. They ask us not to turn away from these stories of torture and of rape camps in war zones; of the horrors of war visited on civilians; of the yearning for a homeland, and the fight for clean water. They show us the painstaking struggle for freedom of expression; the fates of political and environmental refugees around the world; the plight of indigenous peoples; the threats to childhood; the violence perpetrated on homosexuals under some regimes; oppression in China and Burma; and the erasure of peoples like the Kurds and the Bhutanese. These are films that bear witness to human rights abuses while also planting seeds of hope and shared humanity – such as the film in which music becomes an instrument for peace.

### 3<sup>RD</sup> MHRFF - AWARDS & JURY

**MHRFF Documentary Grand Prize** (\$2500) - Awarded by the Conférence régionale des élus (CRÉ) of Montreal.

Jury: **Pierre-Nicolas Durand** (France), documentary filmmaker and producer (winner of the 2007 MHRFF Documentary Grand Prize for *It's Not a Gun*, co-directed by Hélène Cotinier); **Mahalia Verna**, Head of Program Development for CBC Television (Quebec), and **Yves Langlois** (Quebec), an activist screenwriter, director, and film editor for more than 25 years.

**MHRFF Audience Award** (1000\$) - Awarded by Amnesty International.

**MHRFF Quebec Prize for Socially Engaged Documentary** (\$1000) - Awarded by La Fondation de la tolérance.

### OPENING NIGHT

**Thursday March 27, 2008 7:30 PM - Alumni Auditorium, Concordia University - Henry F. Hall Building -1455 de Maisonneuve West (Guy Concordia metro) – Open to the public (Tickets \$7).**

The 2008 MHRFF opens with the North American première of a film that exposes the absurdity of war while raising a hymn to brotherhood. *L'étoile du soldat* (France, 2006, 100') by **Christophe de Ponfilly**, distributed by Les films du Losange, is the only fiction film this great reporter and documentarian made before his suicide in May 2006. He was a friend of Afghanistan's Commander Ahmed Shah Masood, and the film relates his own experience in a story that touched him personally: that of a young Russian soldier, singer and musician who, like thousands of other conscripts, landed in Afghanistan in 1984 to fight a war that was not his own and that he did not understand. The young soldier weaves a bond of friendship with the mujahideens who have taken him prisoner, and becomes a fellow traveller with them.

The film's star, **Sacha Bourdo**, will attend the screenings on Opening Night and on Saturday, March 29 at 8.30 pm at the Cinema du Parc.

### CLOSING NIGHT

**Thursday April 3, at 7.30 PM - Cinema du Parc**

**Open to the public (Tickets \$7) – The Awards ceremony will be held before the screenings.**

The Closing Night screenings include two shorts: *A Human Request* (Germany 2007, 13', fiction, German with English subtitles) by **Eugen Schlegel** and **Christoph Willumeit**; and *The Therapist* (Estonia 2007, 4', animation, no dialogue) by **Katre Haav**. Both were made for the 2nd International Short Film Competition organised by the Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future Foundation and the Goethe Institute to mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The feature film is *Invisibles* (Spain 2007, 107', multilingual with French subtitles), 5 documentary segments that pay tribute to the work of Doctors Without Borders on the 20th anniversary of that organization's founding. The films show people living through appalling humanitarian and medical crises, most of which go unreported. *Bianca's Dream* (Mariano Barroso, Spain) opposes the realities of two women. *Letters to Nora* (Isabel Coixet, Spain) tells an immigration story. *The Voice of the Stones* (Javier Corcuera, Peru) shows a family deep in the Colombian countryside. *Good Night, Ouma* (Fernando León de Aranoa, Spain) follows child soldiers in Uganda. Lastly, *Invisible Crimes* (Wim Wenders, Germany) denounces the rape of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The MHRFF is supported by a **Board of Governors**, established in 2006. Its members are known for their commitment to social, political, economic and cultural ideals and their concern for human rights.

**CO-CHAIRS:** **Honey A. Dresher**, President, Culture Diversity Communications - **André Paradis**, Amnesty International

**HONORARY MEMBERS:** Michèle Asselin, Chair, Fédération des femmes du Québec; **Charles Binamé**, filmmaker; **Gaétan Cousineau**, Chair, Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ); **François Crépeau**, Academic Director, CÉRIUM, Université de Montréal; **Ellen Gabriel**, Chair, Quebec Native Women Association; **Danièle Lacourse**, filmmaker, producer, Chair, Alter-Ciné Foundation; **Dany Laferrière**, writer and filmmaker; **Hugo Latulippe**, filmmaker; **Janet Lumb**, Director, Festival Accès Asie; **André Melançon**, filmmaker, actor; **Maria Luisa Monreal**, Executive Director, AQOCI; **Brenda Paris**, STM board member, Chair, Ethnic and Social Diversity Committee; **Patricia Rimock**, Chair, Conseil des relations interculturelles; **Raymonde Provencher**, filmmaker, producer, screenwriter; **Hubert Sacy**, Senior Partner, BleuBlancRouge; **Alexandre Trudeau**, filmmaker, Chair, Canada World Youth; **Réjean Thomas**, MD, President, Clinique l'Actuel; **Shuni Tsou**, Coordinator, Diversité Artistique Montréal; **Laure Waridel**, writer, eco-sociologist, Équiterre co-founder.

## *HUMAN RIGHTS FILM NETWORK*

In January 2007, the MHRFF joined the *Human Rights Film Network* (HRFN), an international network established in Prague in 2004 to promote socially and politically engaged films by making them available to a wider public, and to increase the circulation of films on human rights at film festivals. [www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org](http://www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org)

The MHRFF was co-founded by its current chair, Alix Laurent, who is also a member of the board of directors of Culture Montréal.

## TICKETS (\$7 per screening)

Cinéma du Parc – 3575 Parc Ave. • T. 514-281-1900 – [www.cinemaduparc.com](http://www.cinemaduparc.com)

TICKETS GO ON SALE MARCH 13, 2008 AT CINÉMA DU PARC AND ONLINE.

NFB Cinema - 1564 St-Denis – [www.onf.ca/cinerotheque](http://www.onf.ca/cinerotheque) - TICKETS AT NFB CINEMA.

## INFO-FESTIVAL

3<sup>rd</sup> Montreal Human Rights Film Festival • Cinéma du Parc / NFB Cinema • March 27 - April 3, 2008

THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM IS FREE, AND WILL BE AVAILABLE ON MARCH 15, 2008.

THE FULL PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [www.fdpdm.com](http://www.fdpdm.com)

## MEDIA

High-resolution images: <http://www.fdpdm.com/fr/dl.html>

Online press accreditation: [www.fdpdm.com](http://www.fdpdm.com) (at the "Press" section after March 13).

Several films are available on DVD - Please contact the Press Officer.

MÉDIA RELATIONS, INTERVIEWS: Marie Marais, Press Officer

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