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**THE CALIFORNIA FILM INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES DOCPITCH AWARDS
AND AUDIENCE FAVORITE AT THE
2021 DOCLANDS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL**



**FINDING THE MONEY WINS DOCPITCH \$30,000 AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD
THE UNTITLED 19TH* NEWS FILM WINS DOCPITCH \$25,000 JURY AWARD
AND
THE MAGNITUDE OF ALL THINGS
2021 DOCLANDS OVERALL AUDIENCE FAVORITE AWARD**

San Rafael, CA – DocLands Documentary Film Festival concluded Sunday, May 16, after ten days of virtual and in-person screenings at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center. The 2021 edition of DocLands featured a robust slate of 42 feature-length and short films, from 10 countries, with over 30 filmmakers and speakers from around the globe participating in pre-recorded online conversations.

"DocLands 2021 is both indicative of a particular place in time, albeit an unprecedented one, and reflective of systemic issues that remain and are more critical than ever," said Mark Fishkin. "This year's films reflected the universal feelings and issues brought to the forefront from our experience with COVID. Our love of nature and our efforts to save our valuable resources and fellow living creatures, the international momentum to shed the spotlight on the ever-present inequities between people across the planet, and our efforts to create a more fair and humane society. Then there were the films that clearly show that we all have more in common than our differences; and personal stories that resonate universally, providing moments of clarity and joy."

Fishkin also commented, "For the first time in over a year, we hosted a festival in a movie theater - our very own Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center. Though limited in scope, with a half dozen in-theater screenings over ten days, we were able to come together and have that shared experience of watching a film. The excitement was palpable for the screening of Amy Tan: Unintended Memoir, and not surprisingly, after the Q&A with Amy Tan and Kyle Redford, audience members were reluctant to leave the theater."

"A heartfelt thank you to all the filmmakers who participated in DocLands, and to our members and community who have unwaveringly supported us."

There were many highlights throughout the ten days, including in-person screenings of **Amy Tan: Unintended Memoir** followed by an on-stage conversation with CFI Executive Director/Founder Mark Fishkin, Amy Tan and Kyle Redford, and **Youth v Gov** featuring an in-person Q&A with CFI Director of Education Joanne Parsont and director Christi Cooper, as well as virtual conversations with audience favorite, **The Magnitude of All Things** director Jennifer Abbott, **The Sparks Brothers** director Edgar Wright and subjects Ron & Russell Mael, **Playing with Sharks** director Sally Aitken, producer Bettina Dalton and film subject Valerie Taylor, **Summer of Soul** director Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson, and the virtual presentation of the **DocLands Honors Award** to Academy Award®-winning filmmakers Steven Bogner and Julia Reichert (*American Factory, 9to5: The Story of a Movement*) to name just a few.

DocLands 2021 closed with the live online announcement of four juried industry awards totaling \$40,000 and a \$30,000 Audience Choice Award. The awards were distributed Sunday evening, May 16, 2021, through the CFI fundraising initiative DocPitch, designed to aid filmmakers in completing their documentary film projects currently in development, with support from the Nancy P. & Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation, Project No. 9, and members of the California Film Institute Board of Directors.

"Because of Covid, we found ourselves presenting our filmmaker funding initiative DocPitch again in a virtual space. This may seem impersonal, but was incredibly effective," said Joni Cooper, DocLands Director of Programming. "The cohort of DocPitchers this year was able to reach audiences much further afield than a single live event presented in a theater. It allowed them to 'shout' about their projects with greater visibility to reach a much larger pool of supporters—funders, distributors, philanthropists, fellow filmmakers, and audiences—all of whom showed up to vote but who may also ultimately provide additional support." Cooper continued, "After the audience votes were carefully verified and tallied, we're delighted to announce that the \$30,000 Audience Choice Award went to director Maren Poitras for her project **Finding the Money**. An industry jury comprised of Jimmie Briggs of Skoll Foundation, Jon-Sesrie Goff of Ford Foundation, and Carrie Lozano of the Sundance Documentary Program presented the \$25,000 Industry Award to directors Heather Courtney and Chelsea Hernandez for their project **The Untitled 19th* News Film**."

"This was not an easy choice," said Carrie Lozano. "Each project is excellent and deserving, with a range of high stakes, indelible protagonists, and truly surprising narrative turns. **The Untitled 19th* News Film** resonated in its urgency," she continued. "Capturing an upstart and revolutionary news organization, run by and for women, during a time of crisis, misinformation and reflection on who gets to make the news and how that impacts our society is indeed pressing. At the same time, the intimacy, introspection and levity stood out."

DocPitch Award Recipients

\$30,000 Audience Award	<i>Finding the Money</i> , director Maren Poitras
\$25,000 Jury Award	<i>The Untitled 19th* News Film</i> , directors Heather Courtney, Chelsea Hernandez
\$5,000 Jury Award	<i>Higher 15</i> , director Ameha Molla
\$5,000 Jury Award	<i>Mom & Dad's Nipple Factory</i> , director Justin Johnson (a.k.a. Justinsuperstar)
\$5,000 Jury Award	<i>A Photographic Memory</i> , director Rachel Elizabeth Seed

CFI Education presented the first annual DocLands Education program, a selection of 10 free online film programs for grades 4-12 curated from the full DocLands festival program, with more than 2700 students from 33 different schools participating around the country. Each screening included pre-recorded conversations with filmmakers, film subjects, and subject experts along with discussion guides, lesson plans and film analysis toolkits to help integrate the films into classroom curriculum. DocLands Education also included several Filmmakers Go to School visits, connecting another 900 students in real time with festival filmmakers from around the world through live online conversations.

"Documentary film is one of the greatest ways for students to learn about the world and to build empathy and awareness," said CFI Director of Education Joanne Parsont. "DocLands Education gave teachers so many incredible films and subjects to choose from—from climate change to restorative justice to the college application process." Parsont continued, "in such a challenging year for schools, we were thrilled to still be able to offer so many great resources on our online platform and to reach students wherever they are."

The 2021 DocLands Audience Favorite Award went to Jennifer Abbott for her deeply intimate and thought-provoking feature-length documentary *The Magnitude of All Things*.

About DOCLANDS

Presented by the California Film Institute, DocLands Documentary Film Festival brings compelling stories and the provocative insights behind them to Marin County, California May 7-16, 2021. Expanding upon the exchange of ideas and inspiration through public screenings, engaged conversations and grassroots networking events, DocLands aims to build an active, involved, fully supportive community around documentary film, dedicated to initiating connections and partnerships that will illuminate and invigorate the business and art of non-fiction filmmakers.

DOCLANDS Sections

Art of Impact engages and sparks action by sharing stories that open our eyes to the global community and its disparate cultures, politics, personal narratives, and biographies.

The Great Outdoors transports us outside to truly appreciate, explore, and ultimately compel us to save and conserve our environment and the wilds of our precious and precarious planet.

WonderLands lifts our spirits through stories of joy, wonder, and possibility.

About California Film Institute

The California Film Institute (CFI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating and promoting film and media arts through the presentation of the internationally acclaimed Mill Valley Film Festival celebrating its 44th year in 2021 and the 5th annual DocLands Documentary Film Festival, the ongoing cultivation of the next generation of filmmakers and film lovers through CFI Education, which features a broad range of activities, including screenings, Q&A sessions and seminars with top international and local filmmakers and industry professionals as well as a rich program of classes and hands-on-workshops. Additionally, CFI acts as a year-round film-centric town hall with a diverse calendar of programming at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, one of the leading non-profit independent theatres in the country. The art of storytelling through film enables CFI to touch 275,000 guests throughout the year with films and events that entertain as well as address a breadth of social, environmental and cultural issues. CFI relies on the generosity of its community to sustain these core programs. The invaluable support of our sponsors, foundations, and individual donors ensures our continued success. For more information visit cafilm.org

Supporters

CFI is once again proud to acknowledge the Nancy P. and Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation, Wareham Development, Project No. 9, Genuine Article Pictures, Bellam Self Storage and Boxes, Netflix, Jennifer Coslett MacCready, Jim Boyce Trust and Kris Otis, The EACH Foundation, Make it Better Media, and the Academy of Integrated Humanities and New Media for their generous support of DOCLANDS. We are also fortunate to have the contributions of the following DocPitch supporters Netflix, Nancy P. and Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation, Project No. 9 and members of the California Film Institute Board of Directors.