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THE DOCYARD ANNOUNCES FALL 2019 SEASON AT THE BRATTLE THEATRE

The Fall Season begins September 9 with Hassan Fazili's MIDNIGHT TRAVELER and concludes December 16 with Shengze Zhu's PRESENT.PERFECT

CAMBRIDGE, MA — The DocYard, Boston's home for artful non-fiction cinema, has just announced its Fall 2019 program of documentary films and visiting filmmakers. The program runs **from September 9 through December 16** with most screenings taking place at 7pm at the **Brattle Theatre**, the DocYard's long-time partner venue in the heart of Harvard Square. Each screening will be followed by a filmmaker discussion.

The season starts on **Monday, September 9** with **MIDNIGHT TRAVELER**, directed by filmmaker **Hassan Fazili**. **MIDNIGHT TRAVELER** is crafted from Fazili's personal footage captured during his family's escape from the Taliban in Afghanistan and of their long journey to Europe as refugees. In reviewing the film, **Wendy Ide** of **Screen Daily** writes, *["A remarkable achievement... while there have been numerous documentaries which deal with the plight of asylum seekers, there have been few which have shown, with this level of intimacy, the journey of a family from certain danger to an uncertain fate.... It's a film which deserves to be as widely seen as possible..."](#)*. The film had its world premiere at the **2019 Sundance Film Festival** where it won a **World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award for No Borders**, and then went on to screen at the Berlin International Film Festival and True/False Film Festival. **Producer Su Kim** will attend via Skype for Q&A following the DocYard's screening of the film.

On **Monday, September 23**, the DocYard presents Sara Dosa's **THE SEER AND THE UNSEEN**. The film follows Ragnhildur "Ragga" Jónsdóttir, an Icelandic woman who has the ability to communicate with elf spirits and who speaks out on their behalf in response to the ecological devastation taking place throughout Iceland. **Caryn James** of **The Hollywood Reporter** writes: *["While its mystical subject defies logic, Sara Dosa's verité film is cogent and appealing thanks to a savvy strategy. Dosa respects Ragga's beliefs without endorsing them, and positions her activism as a metaphor for saving the environment.... This captivating film does not ask viewers to see elves with her, but to observe and hear the quiet, enduring, threatened natural world all around."](#)* **THE SEER AND THE UNSEEN** had its world premiere at the **2019 SFFilm Festival**, where it won the **McBaine Bay Area Documentary Prize**. The Film went on to screen at the Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival and the Melbourne International Film Festival. **Director Sara Dosa** will attend in person for Q&A following the DocYard's screening of the film.

In partnership with the **Boston Latino International Film Festival** for its opening night film to take place on **Wednesday, September 25 at 7:30pm** at the **Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**, the DocYard will co-present Alex Rivera and Cristina Ibarra's **THE INFILTRATORS**, a hybrid documentary that tells the story of Claudio Rojas, an immigrant from Argentina in the United States who was detained by ICE in a raid outside of his home, and the activist Dreamer Marco Saavedra who infiltrated the for-profit detention center where Rojas was being held. Rojas and

Saavedra were eventually both released, and the film, which won **the Audience Award and the NEXT Innovator Award** at the **2019 Sundance Film Festival**, makes use of both interviews and narrative re-enactments to retell this remarkable story. In his review of the film, **Christopher Llewellyn Reed of Hammer to Nail** writes, [“Directors Cristina Ibarra and Alex Rivera create a hybrid work that is equal parts journalistic exposé and taut drama, and one hundred percent cinema.”](#) However, in a move that has been called retaliatory by Rojas’ attorney, Rojas was again arrested by ICE and [deported to Argentina on April 2, 2019](#) in the months after the film’s premiere. Rojas’ ability to return to the United States remains unknown. **Following the screening, there will be a discussion with directors Alex Rivera and Cristina Ibarra, moderated by WBUR’s Simón Ríos.**

Other fall season features include **Brett Story’s THE HOTTEST AUGUST**, **Roni Moore and James Blagden’s MIDNIGHT IN PARIS**, **Miles Lagoze’s COMBAT OBSCURA**, and **Dónal Foreman’s THE IMAGE YOU MISSED**. Additionally, the fall season will feature a special New England legacy presentation of **LEONA’S SISTER GERRI** (1995) by **Jane Gillooly**, a longtime Boston-based filmmaker and professor at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, whose other works include **TODAY THE HAWK TAKES ONE CHICK** (1998), **SUITCASE OF LOVE AND SHAME** (2013), and **WHERE THE PAVEMENT ENDS** (2018). Released in 1995, **LEONA’S SISTER GERRI** speaks to our present moment with searing immediacy by exploring the hidden history of a controversial photograph showing a young woman’s death from an illegal abortion. At the time of its release, Madeline Drexler of **the Boston Globe Magazine** wrote [“Fleshing out the life behind a now iconic image, Gillooly makes the political personal, the abstract particular and in so doing uncover layers of humanity often missing in political rhetoric.”](#)

The DocYard will conclude its Fall Season on **December 16** with **PRESENT.PERFECT**, directed by the Chicago-based filmmaker Shengze Zhu. **The Hollywood Reporter’s Neil Young** writes that the film is a [“leisurely, illuminating immersion into the streams of Chinese life.... Shengze makes no attempt to organize her material into any kind of story framework. Instead she offers myriad glimpses into dozens of ordinary lives across the world’s most populous nation. It’s a rich pageant of the quotidian.”](#) The film, which won **the Tiger Award** at the **2019 International Film Festival Rotterdam**, is edited from hours of live-streamed footage collected from internet sources living across the People’s Republic of China, forming a collective reflection on our human need for connection, whether digital or in person. **Director Shengze Zhu will attend via Skype for Q&A following the DocYard’s screening of the film.**

The DocYard’s Fall 2019 Season is programmed by **Sara Archambault**. The Fall 2019 short films selected to precede each feature-length documentary are jointly programmed by **Sara Archambault** and **Genevieve Carmel**, and will be announced later this season.

Season passes are on sale now at an earlybird rate of \$75 through Monday, September 1, at which point the price will go up to \$85 for adults. The student rate for DocYard season passes will remain at \$75 throughout the season. Passes can be purchased online now at [thedocyard.com](#). Individual tickets for each film at the Brattle Theatre are \$12 (\$10 for students and seniors) and can be purchased online at [brattlefilm.org](#) or on the night of each event at the Brattle Theatre box office.

For more information on the DocYard and its Fall 2019 Season, please visit [thedocyard.com](#).

THE DOCYARD FALL 2019 SEASON PROGRAM

***MIDNIGHT TRAVELER* - Directed by Hassan Fazili**
2019, 87 minutes, DCP, color, sound, in Afghan Persian with English subtitles
Monday, September 9 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Producer Su Kim attending via Skype for Q&A

When the Taliban puts a bounty on Afghan director Hassan Fazili's head, he is forced to flee with his wife and two young daughters. Capturing their uncertain journey, Fazili shows firsthand the dangers facing refugees seeking asylum and the love shared between a family on the run.

MIDNIGHT TRAVELER is a feature-length autobiographical documentary chronicling the struggles of a family of Afghan filmmakers on the run after becoming targets of the Taliban. Touching on topics of broad political interest like the refugee crisis in Europe, the film puts a human face on these issues by providing first-person access to one family's choices, anxieties, and hopes as they try to survive deportation, a life in hiding, and the smuggling route to Europe.

***THE SEER AND THE UNSEEN* - Directed by Sara Dosa**
2019, 85 minutes, DCP, color, sound, in Icelandic and English with English subtitles
Monday, September 23 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Director Sara Dosa attending in person for Q&A

Set against the spectacular landscape of Iceland, *THE SEER AND THE UNSEEN* is a magical realist documentary about invisible elves, financial collapse, and the surprising power of belief. The documentary follows Ragnhildur "Ragga" Jónsdóttir, a grandmother and "seer" who has the ability to communicate directly with a parallel realm of elves, or huldafólk (hidden people) -invisible spirits of nature that over half of Iceland believes in. As one of the country's most respected seers, government officials, businesses and individuals hire Ragga to consult the elves to learn where they can and cannot develop land. But when Ragga is called upon to be the elves' 'Lorax' and speak on behalf of nature under threat, she enters a political battle to save an ecologically important lava field set to be razed by road construction -just one of the many needless projects spurred by Iceland's sensational financial meltdown in 2008. Through Ragga's heroic fight, *THE SEER AND THE UNSEEN* explores the invisible forces that shape our world and transform our natural landscapes, revealing not only what is worth seeing but what is worth saving.

***THE INFILTRATORS* - Directed by Alex Rivera and Cristina Ibarra**
2019, 95 minutes, DCP, color, sound, in English and Spanish with English subtitles
Wednesday, September 25 at 7:30pm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Co-presented with the Boston Latino International Film Festival
Directors Alex Rivera and Cristina Ibarra will join post-film Q&A with WBUR's Simón Ríos

"Without warning, Claudio Rojas is detained by ICE officials outside his Florida home. He is transferred to the Broward Transitional Center, a detention facility used as a holding space for imminent deportations. Terrified of never seeing him again, Claudio's family contacts the National Immigrant Youth Alliance (NIYA), a group of activist Dreamers known for stopping deportations. Believing that no one is free as long as one is in detention, NIYA enlists Marco

Saavedra to self-deport with the hopes of gaining access to the detention center and impeding Claudio's expulsion. Once inside, Marco discovers a complex for-profit institution housing hundreds of multinational immigrants, all imprisoned without trial.

Directors Cristina Ibarra (in her Sundance debut) and Alex Rivera (*Sleep Dealer*, 2008 Sundance Film Festival) design a hybrid cinematic language, combining familiar documentary form and scripted narrative to map an uncharted domain: inside an Obama-era immigration detention system. Based on true events, *The Infiltrators* is both a suspenseful account of a high-stakes mission and an emotionally charged portrait of visionary youth fighting for their community."

– Sundance Film Festival

***THE HOTTEST AUGUST* - Directed by Brett Story**
2019, 94 minutes, DCP, color, sound, English
Monday, October 7 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Brett Story attending in person for Q&A

A complex portrait of a city and its inhabitants, *The Hottest August* gives us a window into the collective consciousness of the present. The film's point of departure is one city over one month: New York City, including its outer boroughs, during August 2017. It's a month heavy with the tension of a new President, growing anxiety over everything from rising rents to marching white nationalists, and unrelenting news of either wildfires or hurricanes on every coast. The film pivots on the question of futurity: what does the future look like from where we are standing? And what if we are not all standing in the same place? *The Hottest August* offers a mirror onto a society on the verge of catastrophe, registering the anxieties, distractions, and survival strategies that preoccupy ordinary lives.

***MIDNIGHT IN PARIS* - Directed by Roni Moore and James Blagden**
2019, 75 minutes, DCP, color, sound, English
Monday, October 21 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Director James Blagden (in person) and Roni Moore (via Skype) expected to attend for Q&A

MIDNIGHT IN PARIS is an exuberant portrait of the soon-to-be graduates at Flint, Michigan's Northern High School, centering on their expectations and experiences of the Senior Prom. The students' humor, style, and love, are seen in stark contrast to what the former automotive boom-town is more typically & tragically known for, beyond its city limits.

***COMBAT OBSCURA* - Directed by Miles Lagoze**
2018, 70 min, DCP, color, English, sound mix by Ernst Karel
Monday, November 4 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Miles Lagoze attending in person for Q&A

Just out of high school, at the age of 18, Miles Lagoze enlisted in the Marine Corps. He was deployed to Afghanistan where he served as Combat Camera — his unit's official videographer, tasked with shooting and editing footage for the Corps' recruiting purposes and historical initiatives. But upon discharging, Lagoze took all the footage he and his fellow cameramen shot, and he assembled quite simply the very documentary the Corps does not want you to see. COMBAT OBSCURA is a groundbreaking look at daily life in a war zone as told by the Marines themselves. More than a mere compilation of violence, the edit ingeniously repurposes the

original footage to reveal the intensity and paradoxes of an ambiguous war from an unvarnished perspective.

***LEONA'S SISTER GERRI* - Directed by Jane Gillooly**
1995, 57 minutes, color, sound, English
Monday, November 18 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Jane Gillooly attending in person for Q&A
New England Legacy Film!

LEONA'S SISTER GERRI tells the dramatic story of Gerri Santoro, a mother of two and the "real person" in the now famous photo of an anonymous woman on a motel floor, dead from an illegal abortion. Reprinted thousands of times on placards, and in the media, this grisly photo became a pro-choice icon. Should the media have used this image? What circumstances led to Gerri's tragic death? Powerfully addressing issues of reproductive rights and domestic violence, this video is a moving portrait of Gerri Santoro's life and society's response to her death.

***THE IMAGE YOU MISSED* - Directed by Dónal Foreman**
2018, 73 minutes, DCP, color, sound, English
Monday, December 2 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Dónal Foreman attending in person for Q&A

Drawing on over 30 years of unique and never-seen-before imagery, *The Image You Missed* is a documentary essay film that weaves together a history of the Northern Irish Troubles with the story of a son's search for his father. In the process, the film creates a candid encounter between two filmmakers born into different political moments, revealing their contrasting experiences of Irish nationalism, the role of images in social struggle, and the competing claims of personal and political responsibility.

***PRESENT.PERFECT* - Directed by Shengze Zhu**
2019, 124 minutes, DCP, B&W, sound, Mandarin Chinese & Various Chinese Regional Dialects with English subtitles
Monday, December 16 at 7pm at the Brattle Theatre
Shengze Zhu attending via Skype for Q&A

Weaving together footage filmed and broadcasted by little-known Chinese live-streaming anchors, who struggle with real-life face-to-face social interaction because of their identity, disability and social-economic status, this cinematic collage explores how individuals satisfy their cravings for human connection through virtual togetherness, and how these virtual relationships challenge standard definitions of companionship.

THE DOCYARD

Created in 2010 by Sara Archambault, Sean Flynn and Ben Fowlie, the DocYard has quickly become one of Boston's most respected cinematic events, screening a combination of new works from emerging filmmakers and classics from some of the region's most distinguished filmmakers. The series was recognized with a special commendation from the Boston Society of Film Critics for "presenting a vibrant forum for the Boston documentary community to see important new non-fiction works and to have meaningful discussions with the filmmakers." And a BostInno 50 on Fire Media Award for "establishing itself as a destination film festival for the

genre” in Boston.

The DocYard is a program of the LEF Foundation. Founding sponsors include the Camden International Film Festival, Principle Pictures, and the LEF Foundation. Series sponsors include the Irving House at Harvard and the Tyler Family Foundation.

For more information on the DocYard, visit thedocyard.com.

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