

**RIDM: Where all stories meet!**  
from November 15 to 26, 2023  
[2023 Trailer](#)



*Bye Bye Tiberias* by Lina Soualem

**Montreal, Tuesday, November 14, 2023** - The 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM)** will kick off tomorrow and run until November 26, with several local and international guests in attendance. Audiences are invited to a 12-day journey of discovery, thanks to an imaginative program featuring around one hundred documentary works.

The festival gets underway on **Wednesday, November 15 at 7 p.m. at Cinéma Impérial** with the screening of [Bye Bye Tiberias](#), with French-Palestinian-Algerian filmmaker **Lina Soualem** in attendance, and with the support of the Consulate General of France in Quebec City. An insightful exploration of four generations of women, the documentary finds Soualem revisiting the story of her mother, actress **Hiam Abbass** (*Lemon Tree, Succession*), who left her native village at an early age to follow her dreams. This documentary feature moves seamlessly through archives, poems and voice-over to reconstruct the story of her Palestinian family. The film sensitively emphasizes the importance of lineage while exploring intergenerational relationships in the context of exile and displacement. The result is a luminous portrait of resilient women, in which family grief and personal memories offer gateways to the memory of an entire people.

Preceding the screening of the opening film will be the short film [Here and There](#), directed by **Chadi Bennani** as part of the Conseil des arts de Montréal's *Regard sur Montréal 2023* residency. Through intimate conversations, the film juxtaposes the various influences and realities that steer the development of the cultural identity of second and third-generation immigrants. The evening will continue at the Cinémathèque québécoise, the festival's headquarters, with a celebratory soirée of music featuring the AjiByrd duo.

## DAY 2 – Thursday, November 16

The second day of the festival will include the screening of [Má Sài Gòn \(Mother Saigon\)](#) by Khoa Lê, which has its Quebec premiere at RIDM. Having explored his Vietnamese roots in *BÀ NÔI* (RIDM 2013), the filmmaker returns to his native country to explore the emotional bonds that bind together members of its 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The film is an eloquent celebration of the authenticity and power of human relationships and highlights how family – whether biological or chosen – remains a cornerstone of Vietnamese culture. Audiences will then be invited to an evening of sounds from Vietnam and beyond, with Japanese, Chinese and American music mixed by Montreal collective Transpacific Express.

Filmmakers from every corner of the globe will be on hand to present their works to the Montreal public. From France, filmmakers **Nicolas Klotz** and **Elisabeth Perceval** reflect on today's world as well as cinema in [New World! \(The World Anew\)](#), taking us to Ouessant, the Breton island where Jean Epstein settled in search of reality after directing *The Fall of the House of Usher* in 1928. From South Korea, **Arum Nam** turns her camera on her parents, two members of the 386 Generation, in her first feature-length documentary [K-Family Affairs](#). Caught between the conformism of her father, who has become a high-ranking civil servant, and the enthusiasm of her mother, a feminist activist, the filmmaker tries to find her own place and the part she can also play in the transformation of society. Then, from Brazil, [Crowã](#) by **João Salaviza** and **Renée Nader Messor** lands at RIDM after winning the Ensemble Prize at the Cannes Film Festival in the Un Certain Regard section. Filmed in 16mm over a period of fifteen months, the film spans nearly a century of memories of the Krahô, an indigenous community in Brazil whose stories of resistance are as powerful as those of the carnage they survived. The characters, some of whom co-wrote the screenplay, give themselves over to the filming process with remarkable ease, which endows the work with an authenticity rarely encountered in cinema.

## DAY 3 – Friday, November 17

The festival's third day boasts a truly diverse line-up. Festivalgoers will have the unique opportunity to attend the [Sonia Wieder-Atherton in Concert: A Tribute to Chantal Akerman](#) performance. Images from two of Akerman's films – *American Stories: Food, Family and Philosophy* and [From the East](#) (a restored print will screen on Thursday, November 16) – will be projected at a slow pace, as Sonia Wieder-Atherton, the late filmmaker's partner, brings her cello into dialogue with the visuals. In a completely different vein, RIDM will present its very first [Women's Wrestling Event](#) to mark the world premiere of the film [Sisters of Wrestling](#) by **Sarah Baril Gaudet**, which follows Azaelle, Loue O'Farrell and LuFisto. Far from the hyped-up crowds they perform for, these ring warriors confide in Baril Gaudet from the intimacy of their homes. Another Quebec film will have its world premiere that same evening: [Diary of a Father](#) by **Claude Demers**, who previously brought us *A Woman, My Mother* (RIDM 2019). Inspired by his different entry points into fatherhood, both as a father himself and through his relationships with his biological and adoptive fathers, the filmmaker offers a tender exploration of fatherhood, imbued with love and melancholy, and as personal as can be.

As part of the [Focus Bidayyat: New Beginnings](#) program, a roundtable discussion entitled [Intimate Histories / Interior Documentary](#) will be held at McGill University. For an entire generation of young artists, the Arab Spring proved to be the spark that set off a creative explosion. In response to this tipping point, Bidayyat brought together filmmakers, mentors and media activists of all ages to produce films that would shed light on this unprecedented historical moment. The panelists will reflect on their films, the role of art and aesthetics in Arab liberation movements, and the daily relevance of these questions as they edit their films at Bidayyat. This roundtable will be followed by a screening of the film [Coma](#) by Syrian director **Sara Fattahi** at the Cinémathèque québécoise.

Still on the international front, RIDM is pleased to welcome Belgian director **Natan Castay**, who will present [\*En attendant les robots\*](#), a docu-fiction that delves into a reality shared by tens of thousands of people around the world: turking. Through the fictional character of Otto, the director initiates an experimental investigation into this digital landscape where blurring a face on Google Street View earns you a cent and employees are paid in Amazon gift cards.

Awarded an honourable mention at the Slamdance Festival, RIDM will also welcome experimental filmmaker **Kimi Takesue**, whose [\*Onlookers\*](#) collects snapshots of the comings and goings of tourists in Laos. She films them interacting with other tourists and locals. Postcolonial issues, already evoked by the film's subject matter, are underscored by the emphasis on our role as onlookers.

#### **DAY 4 – Saturday, November 18**

Two filmmakers who are no strangers to RIDM will return to present the Canadian premiere of their respective films. Five years after *Dark Suns* (Grand Prize, National Feature – RIDM 2018), **Julien Elie** returns with [\*La Guardia Blanca\*](#), shedding light on the regime of terror and violence brought about by transnational mining companies, in collaboration with the Mexican government and organized crime, which enables them to lay claim to territories and exploit their resources. As for **Peter Mettler** (*The End of Time* – RIDM 2012's opening film), he will be in Montreal to present [\*While the Green Grass Grows\*](#), a seven-part series, two chapters of which will be presented as a feature at the festival. Winner of the Grand Prize, International Feature Competition at Visions du réel, this epic and intimate cinematic exploration hones in on the director's personal experience of losing his parents during the pandemic. The filmmaker will also deliver a masterclass on Sunday, November 19.

First Nations perspectives will be explored in the films [\*WaaPaKe \(Tomorrow\)\*](#) by **Jules Arita Koostachin**, who creates a safe space to meet survivors of indigenous residential schools, shed light on all those whom the authorities tried to erase and help tend to the wounds of this horrifying chapter in North American colonial history; and [\*The Great Kind Mystery\*](#) by **Ella Norton**, which follows Inuk and Mi'kmaq artist Amy Hull as she questions her relationship to Newfoundland, where she was born.

Filmmaker **Boubacar Sangaré** will present [\*A Golden Life\*](#), a film that immerses us in the cramped conditions of workers in Burkina Faso's gold mining industry. Capturing moments of life shared by gold hunters in search of a better future, his film paints an edifying portrait of youths exposed to ever-present dangers. **Nour Ouayda** will also be at the festival to present [\*The Secret Garden\*](#), a poetic film that raises important questions about the natural world around us.

A listening session of creative audio documentaries will take place at Cinéma Moderne, thanks to the help of **Jenny Cartwright**, to highlight works not rooted in conventional cinematic practices.

#### **DAY 5 – Sunday, November 19**

In keeping with tradition, RIDM will run family screenings each Sunday morning at the Cinémathèque Québécoise, with the aim of introducing budding filmmakers to documentary-inspired cinema. As a first activity, the Montreal-based artists' studio **la lumière collective** will introduce youngsters aged 5 to 17 to experimental cinema with a first screening followed by a painting-on-celuloid workshop led by filmmaker Guillaume Vallée.

Presented on the fifth day of the festival, the works of many filmmakers who will be on hand for post-screening discussions with audiences prompt very relevant lines of inquiry. These include [\*Notes from Eremocene\*](#) by Slovak documentary filmmaker **Viera Čákanová**, which explores a dystopian future as a way to question our relationship with digital technologies; [\*Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project\*](#) by directors **Joe Brewster** and

**Michèle Stephenson**, which looks back on the defining moments of an activist's struggle for social justice and equality in the U.S.; [Stolen Time](#), an investigative documentary by Canadian director **Helene Klodawsky**, which brings to light the negligence of an entire system, recounting the crusade of lawyer Melissa Miller (also in attendance at the screening) against the for-profit nursing home industry; and [Silvicola](#) by **Jean-Philippe Marquis**, who profiles forestry workers as a way to call into question an industry that exploits a natural resource we know to be in decline.

Among the many guests attending this year, the festival is delighted to welcome **Rosine Mbakam** (*Delphine's Prayers* – RIDM 2021) and her film [Mambar Pierrette](#). With her trademark gentle and sensitive approach, the Cameroonian filmmaker brings her documentary background to bear in this frank work of fiction. *Mambar Pierrette* portrays a delicate yet determined woman who must show resilience to meet the needs of her children.

**The Soirée de la relève Radio-Canada**, also taking place on Sunday, November 19, will showcase short documentaries by up-and-coming Quebec filmmakers. A one-of-a-kind opportunity for audiences to take in the achievements of both current and fledgling voices. This year's six finalists are [Casa Bonjardim](#) by **Camille Salvetti**, [Clémence](#) by **Myriam Ben Saïd**, [Where Motion Has Not Yet Ceased](#) by **Juliette Balthazard**, [ZEITGEIST](#) by **Louise Blancheteau**, [It Is What It Is](#) by **Nicole Doummar** and [La ravissante](#) by **Diego Gros-Louis**. The soirée will culminate at the Cinémathèque québécoise with the After de la relève.

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at the Cinémathèque québécoise, Cinéma du Parc, Cinéma du Musée,  
Cineplex Odeon Quartier Latin, Cinéma Moderne, and Cinéma Impérial.

**To find out everything about the 2023 program and buy tickets:** [ridm.ca](http://ridm.ca)

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