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**Planet in Focus Film Fest Announces 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lineup**  
– Over 85 environmentally-focused films from 25 countries –  
**October 21-25 - Box Office Opens October 1!**

**Canadian Films from *Toward a 2020 Vision* Spotlight Open & Close Fest.**  
**Unprecedented *Land & Conflict* program features works from Palestine, Israel and**  
**Canadian Artists from Diasporic Communities.**  
**Special Series of films from China include Feature Dramas.**  
Film Industry Panels, workshops, youth and children's programs and more!

Toronto, September 28, 2009– Artistic Director **Candida Paltiel** is pleased to announce the exciting lineup for the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of the **Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival**, Canada's premiere environmental film festival. The festival runs **October 21 to October 25** in Toronto and showcases **over 85** outstanding and compelling environmentally-themed films **from 25 countries**. Panels, workshops, youth, student and children's programs as well as an industry symposium are also on offer. **The box office opens October 1.** Visit [www.planetinfocus.org](http://www.planetinfocus.org) for full details.

**Planet in Focus** features an unparalleled array of films from underrepresented communities in the world with works from Niger, Bosnia, Egypt and China as well as international filmmakers profiling the social conditions of Pygmies in Cameroon, Nomad communities in Siberia and the South Sahara, Aboriginal communities in Canada and a stunning documentary about the dilemma faced by a Bedouin community populated with the highest percentage of deaf people in the world.

Two of the many Canadian films not only bookend the festival as **Opening (*Finding Farley*)** and **Closing Galas (*Earth Keepers*)**, but do double duty as the opening and closing films of this year's **Spotlight Program: Fast Forward Toward a 2020 Vision**, which features films that focus on the insights, practices, technologies and visions that will deliver real and effective change over the next decade and beyond.

The films not only tackle a wide array of issues, but do so through an incredible variety of cinematic forms, techniques and styles – from documentary and dramatic to animated and experimental works of all lengths – heralding the continued evolution and growth of environmentally-themed filmmaking. In particular, the program illustrates the endless potential inherent in the documentary form, pushing it in ways rarely seen.

The Royal Cinema hosts the **Gala Opening on October 21** with the Toronto premiere of **Leanne Allison's *Finding Farley*** that also **launches the 2020 Vision Spotlight Program**. All of the subjects in the film will be in attendance: the filmmaker, her husband, her then 2- now 5-year-old, and the person who the family travelled 5,000 kms to see, literary icon **Farley Mowat** himself. Allison, Karsten Heuer and son paddled, walked and sailed to create a film that retraces the literary landscapes of their hero's beloved classics and reassures us the Canadian wilderness still exists.

**Maude Barlow** (National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians, Senior Advisor on Water to the President of the United Nations General Assembly) and **Ian Clifford**, CEO of the ZENN Motor Company, will also be in attendance at the Gala Opening to receive **2009 Planet in Focus Eco-Hero Awards**: Barlow will be given the **International Eco-Hero Award** while Clifford receives PIF's **Canadian Eco Hero Award**. The **Closing Night Gala** (ROM 7pm, Oct. 25) will award CBC's flagship program ***The Nature of Things With David Suzuki*** the **Industry/ Media Eco Hero Award**, along with the festival's other film awards.

Other notable Canadian features and shorts include the **Canadian premieres** of *Crude Sacrifice* (2009) wherein director **Lawrence Carota** exposes the lies, injustices and contradictions buried in Alberta's Tar Sands, one of the most controversial places on earth; and *Over Land* (2008), an intimate and personal portrait of filmmaker **Steven Suderman**'s family as they face the end of their family farm. A Canadian shorts program features everything from modern dance (*Becoming*) to retro claymation (*Hyperhelion*) to classics (*Flak*).

This year PIF has chosen to feature 8 **films from China** including, unusually, feature dramas such as the **North American premiere** of *Rural Litigation* (2008, Han Wan Feng), a gripping story of rural China that tackles corruption while heralding the country's emerging eco-conscience; and the Canadian premiere of *Bird's Nest* (2008, Ning Jingwu), a fish-out-of-water tale that reflects on the changing face of China in a heartwarming story in the tradition of *Oliver Twist*. The documentaries range from dark, poetic takes on wildlife (*Silent Valley*) to meditative looks at displacement (*JiJi Grass, A Vanishing Village*) to grim documents of working conditions (*Living With Shame*).

The Spotlight Program, **Fast Forward Toward a 2020 Vision**, features the opening film of the festival, *Finding Farley*, as well as the **Closing Night Gala**, the **Canadian premiere** of *Earth Keepers* (2009), by award-winning documentary filmmaker **Sylvie Van Brabant**: a profile of contemporary activism through the eyes of Mikael Rioux who introduces us to new ways of thinking about how to save the earth he loves in this manifesto against apathy. Other titles include the **Canadian premieres** of *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (2009, Paul Olding), a BBC production that examines the famed scientist's influence on the modern environmental movement; and *A Sea Change* (2009, Barbara Ettinger, USA), an alternately warm and chilling doc about what ocean acidification means for future generations. There is also an intriguing panel conversation with five of Toronto's top architects who will look ahead 10 years and give their 2020 vision for Toronto.

Films from around the world about **Africa** as communities there respond to global change also have a substantial showing at the festival. The **North American premiere** of *Bagyeli Pygmies at the Fringes of the World* (2009, Francois Philippe Gallois, France) is a remarkably candid film about the Bagyeli in South Cameroon who are fighting to maintain their very existence while the **Canadian premiere** of *North-South.com* (2007, Francois Ducat, Canada) is a shocking look at how internet dating is affecting the lives of women in urban Cameroon. *Marina of the Zabbaleen* is an empathic and close-up look at the daily life of a family of Coptic garbage collectors in Egypt; *At The Center of the World: Of Wells and Men* is a film from Niger that goes deep into the center of the earth with traditional well diggers in rudimentary equipment.

Canadian premieres abound in a collection of films from **Eastern Europe**, a region that continues to push the boundaries of cinema, ranging from the delightful to the transcendent. *Budapest Wild* puts a visually stunning urban twist on the wildlife genre; *The Invisible Bird Photographer* is a playful portrait of Bence Mate, a renowned, eccentric bird photographer; *The Prayer* is a melancholy, deeply spiritual portrait of two aging Hungarian farmers; and *Darkness on the Edge of Town* is a raw and honest interview with a woman who has been lost to the modern world.

And in an unprecedented collaboration, **Planet in Focus** teams up with the **International Diaspora Film Festival** and **Voices Forward** to present **Land & Conflict**, a multimedia program examining a people and land in contested terrain. Palestinian, Israeli, Bedouin, Burmese and Diasporic viewpoints are presented in this rich panoply of artistic expression beginning **October 24**. The program includes a photography exhibit with famed Canadian photographer **Anne Bayin** and Iranian-born Montreal photographer **Babak Salari**, a literary evening with Palestinian-Canadian writer **Hanadi Loubani**, and a highly-anticipated concert with New York's **David Amram and Friends** who perform *A Musical*

*Mosaic* celebrating the spirit of diaspora with music from the Middle East including Arab, Jewish, Iranian, Afghani and Pakistani influenced arrangements.

The **Land & Conflict** films include the **Canadian premiere** of *Voices from El Sayed* (2008, Oded Adomi Leshem), a multi-layered Israeli film that delicately documents the reactions and dilemma of villagers to an impending cochlear implant on a child in the Bedouin village of El Sayed, home to the largest community of deaf people in the world. *Jerusalem Moments 2009* features 7 young Palestinian and Israeli directors in a series of shorts that reflect the complexity of urban life in Jerusalem in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Other **Middle Eastern** films at PIF examine issues of displacement and the triumph of the human spirit in the face of adversity such as *One Day After the 10<sup>th</sup> Day* (2008, Narges Abyar, Iran), a docu-drama that reveals a special bond between a simple old man in Iran and a camel as the rituals of the Day of Ashura, the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muharram, take centre stage.

Post-screening discussions, panels, film industry workshops, a school program and a free children's program at the Bata Shoe Museum round out the offerings at the festival. Additionally, PIF hosts a Green Market that includes access to a business centre with a 400+ environmental film library for industry delegates.

The 2009 Festival programmers, filmmaker **Tina Hahn** and film critic **Joel McConvey** worked with Artistic Director **Candida Paltiel** in developing the 2009 festival lineup which received over 400 submissions from around the world. At Planet in Focus, environmental artistic expression is presented to audiences as a catalyst for public awareness and action, but each film stands as a unique work of cinematic art devoted to the ecological and social health of the planet.

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The 2009 **Planet in Focus** film festival **features over 85 films on environmental issues** from 25 countries. It also features facilitated pre- and post-screening discussions and panels, a film industry symposium as well as special programs for children and schools. It hosts a Green Market and presents three Eco-Hero Awards (Canadian, International and Industry), film awards and the Mark Haslam Award. A full listing of the line-up can be found at [www.planetinfocus.org](http://www.planetinfocus.org)

**2009 Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival**

**Oct. 21 - Oct. 25, 2009**

**Box Office opens October 1st, 2009.**

**For screening tickets visit [www.planetinfocus.org](http://www.planetinfocus.org) or call the TIFF Box Office at 416-967-FILM.**

**Screenings:** \$10 (\$8 seniors and students, \$5 children under 12).

**Opening & Closing Galas:** \$20 Opening Night Gala & Reception;  
\$15 Closing Night Awards & Reception.

**For All Access Pass (\$100) and Special Events/Children's Program/Workshops**  
call 416-531-4689.

Screenings take place at the Royal Cinema, Bloor Cinema, Bata Shoe Museum, Gardiner Museum, Innis College, Arta Gallery and Royal Ontario Museum.

**Tickets on sale at venue locations one hour prior to show.**  
**For full schedule details, visit [www.planetinfocus.org](http://www.planetinfocus.org)**