

For Immediate Release
October 24, 2016



Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival Announces 2016 Award Winners

Peter Svatek's *Theater of Life* named Best Canadian Feature, while Zhao Liang's *Behemoth* takes Mark Haslam Award. Noe Sardet, Jean-Marc Abela and Sharif Mirshak winners of The Green Pitch with *The Soil Chronicles*.

TORONTO - Closing a very successful 17th edition, the Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival (PiF) has unveiled its award winners for 2016. New this year, the awards include cash prizes. Announced at the festival's Closing Night Gala, the awards include:

Best International Short (\$500)

Sponsored by MINI Downtown

The Rainmakers of Nganyi Steve McDonald, South Africa (2016)

Steve McDonald's doc on the Nganyi rainmakers of western Kenya and their role in helping mitigate the effects of climate change was selected by the following jury: TIFF Short Cuts Programmer **Danis Goulet**; PiF board member and Exec Director of the Institute for a Resource-Based Economy, **Ryan Dymont**; and PiF 2015 International Short winner **Justin Bogardus**.

Best Canadian Short (\$500)

Sponsored by The Green Beaver Company

Kokota: The Islet of Hope Craig Norris, Canada (2016)

Craig Norris' doc on the Indian Ocean islet, a microcosm of the dangers wrought by climate change, was selected by the following jury: Chair of the PiF Board of Directors and Socially Responsible Investing expert and advocate, **Sucheta Rajagopal**; award-winning veteran filmmaker **James Buffin**; and PiF 2015 Best Canadian Short winner **Alex Hawley**.

Best International Feature (\$750)

Sponsored by Spacing

In Pursuit of Silence Patrick Shen, USA (2015)

Patrick Shen's immersive cinematic meditation ponders humanity's relationship with silence, was selected by the following jury: PiF Board Member and GreenPAC treasurer **Alice Madolciu**;

Toronto-based artist and former PiF programmer **Elwood Jimmy**, and multi-award-winning filmmaker and PiF 2011 Eco-Hero **Kevin McMahon**.

Best Canadian Feature (\$750)

Sponsored by Calstone Inc.

Theater of Life Peter Svatek, Canada (2016)

PiF 2016 Opening Night Gala film, Peter Svatek's doc follows Italian celebrity Chef Massimo Bottura and his decision to use Milan's World Expo food surplus to feed the vulnerable, was selected by the following jury: PiF board member and documentary filmmaker **Joan Prowse**; multi-award-winning Canadian documentarian **Mark Terry**; and PiF 2015 Best Canadian Feature winner **Victoria Lean**.

Mark Haslam Award (\$500)

Sponsored by Dynamix Solutions

Behemoth Zhao Liang, China (2016)

Banned from public exhibition in its native China, Zhao Liang's entrancing look at the consequences of the industrialization of Inner-Mongolia was selected for this award by PiF's programming team.

Green Pitch Prize (worth over \$35k in services & cash)

The Soil Chronicles Noe Sardet, Jean-Marc Abela and Sharif Mirshak

Noe Sardet, Jean-Marc Abela and Sharif Mirshak's web series project focusing on the role global soil health could play in stopping climate change was selected by the following jury: **Inga Diev**, General Manager of Ouat Media, **David Miller**, President of A71 Productions and **Paul Moyer**, Partner and Executive Producer at Eggplant Picture & Sound.

Green Pitch Honourable mention: ***Modified*** Aube Giroux

The Green Pitch is sponsored by Eggplant Picture & Sound, PS Production Services, SIM Digital, The Source Shop, Pie in the Sky Studios, Muskoka North Film Studios, Vistek, Trinity Square Video, Rushcut, W. F. Whites, and A71.

About Planet in Focus

Planet in Focus is a charitable organization whose mission is to promote environmental education by raising awareness of critical environmental issues through a variety of media-based initiatives including; the Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival, the Green School Tours, Eco-Film Lab, the PiF Student Film Festival and year 'round screenings that showcase the best environmental films from Canada and around the world. PlanetinFocus.org

The **Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival** is generously supported by
Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Heritage,
Ontario Media Development Corporation,

**Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Trillium Foundation
Telefilm Canada and Toronto Arts Council.**

-30-

For more information contact Daniela Ponce - danielaponce@poncedaniela.com - 647 239 3034