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Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival Announces 2016 Opening and Closing Night Galas

Special guests include chefs Jamie Kennedy, Joshna Maharaj, filmmakers Peter Svatek and Emmanuel Hoss-Desmarais, and world-renowned environmentalist Alexandra Cousteau

Tickets now available at: PlanetinFocus.org

TORONTO - The **Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival** announced today the exciting celebrations that will mark the opening and closing of its 17th edition. Food waste will take centre stage on October 20 for the Festival's Opening Night Gala and Toronto debut of Peter Svatek's ***Theater of Life***. Three cinema-filled days later, the World Premiere of Emanuel Hoss-Desmarais' visually stunning portrait ***What Lies Below***, will close PiF 2016 on October 23.

Winner of the 2016 San Sebastian Culinary Zinema Tokyo Gohan Award, ***Theater of Life*** is a powerful documentary that follows world renowned chef Massimo Bottura, and 60 of the world's best chefs as they join him to cook for refugees and the homeless in Milan. The dishes served at this beautifully designed, remodeled former theatre, called Refettorio Ambrosiano, were created from the wasted food discarded during the city's 2015 Expo. The venture was so successful that it became a permanent location, and Bottura is working on creating similar dining halls —called Refettorios— around the world.

Chefs **Jamie Kennedy**, and **Joshna Maharaj** —who recently returned from Brazil where she collaborated with Bottura at an Olympic-based Refettorio— will join director Peter Svatek at the Opening Night screening at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema. Following the Premiere, the Opening Night party will be held at 918 Bathurst.

A first for Planet in Focus, a photography exhibition with work by Italian photographer Alberto Bobbera will also open at 918 Bathurst on October 20 and will run until October 24. The works on display feature Refettorio Ambrosiano visitors and were taken in 2015, when Peter Svatek was working on the film in Milan.

Closing the Festival —also at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema— is Emanuel Hoss-Desmarais' visually stunning ***What Lies Below***, a touching portrait of Lawrence Gunther, a legally blind environmental advocate. The film follows him as he travels across Canada, inviting people to look deeper at the ecological impact on fish populations of environmental spills from human

sewage and oil extraction in various communities. Director Emanuel Hoss-Desmarais and subject Lawrence Gunther will be in attendance.

Prior to the screening, internationally renowned filmmaker and explorer Alexandra Cousteau will be presented with her Planet in Focus 2016 Eco-Hero Award. The winners of the 2016 “Green Pitch” and Planet in Focus Film Awards will also be announced at the screening.

Film schedule and tickets now available at: PlanetinFocus.org

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

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