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Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival announces Opening and Closing Night events, names Ron Finley International Eco-Hero for 2017.

Opening Night to feature the World Premiere of **Chanda Chevannes' *Unfractured***, with director, and subject **Dr. Sandra Steingraber** in attendance. Closing Night to feature screening of ***Can You Dig This?***, tribute to **Rob Stewart**, and Eco-Hero award for **Ron Finley**, who will give an address.

The 18th Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival takes place
October 19 to 22, 2017 planetinfocus.org

TORONTO - The **Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival (PiF)** announced today the details for its exciting 2017 Opening and Closing events, featuring local and international leaders in the environmental movement, as well as exceptional works of documentary film.

PiF's Opening Night Gala on October 19 will feature the World Premiere of **Chanda Chevannes' *Unfractured***, the latest by the Toronto-based, award-winning documentarian. This uplifting doc follows biologist, mother and activist **Dr. Sandra Steingraber** as she throws herself into an arduous environmental battle many believe is unwinnable. Chevannes follows her as she fiercely commits herself to the cause by making speeches, planning strategy with other activists and even getting arrested while blockading a gas storage site in upstate New York.

Unfractured is also the much-anticipated followup to Chevannes' *Living Downstream* (2010), an adaptation of Steingraber's book of the same name. Both will be present for the film's World Premiere at PiF, set to take place at The Royal Cinema (608 College St). The screening will be followed by a panel discussion at the cinema and a reception at Revival Bar (783 College St).

Director Chevannes has also been invited by the Festival to give the 2017 **Filmmaker MasterClass**, set to take place during the PiF's Industry Conference on October 20 at St. Paul's Bloor Street (227 Bloor St E)

The Closing Night Gala on October 22 will begin with a tribute to the late activist, filmmaker, and educator **Rob Stewart**, which will be presented by Canadian television and radio personality **George Stroumboulopoulos**. Activist and filmmaker **Jonah Bryson**, age 17, will be presented

with the inaugural **Rob Stewart Youth Eco-Hero Award** at the event. PiF's film awards for 2017 will be announced after.

That same night the the Festival will present its closing night film, Delila Vallot's ***Can You Dig This?***, a charismatic doc on the emerging urban gardening movement in South Los Angeles featuring self-described "gangsta gardener" **Ron Finley**, and executive produced by **John Legend**. The film follows inner-city gardeners, of all ages, who are directly transforming their environment and their lives from the ground up, and making affordable, nutritious produce available to their neighbours in the process.

Following the film Finley will be presented with the 2017 International Eco-Hero award and will give an address about his practice. The PiF Closing Night event will take place at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema (506 Bloor St W) with the closing night party following the programme.

Tickets and the **full lineup of films** for the Festival's 18th edition are now available at planetinfocus.org

About Planet in Focus

Planet in Focus is a charitable organization whose mission is to use film as a catalyst for change by raising awareness of critical environmental issues through a variety of media-based initiatives including; the Planet in Focus International 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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