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Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival Announces 2019 Eco-Heroes and Rob Stewart Youth Eco-Hero

Melina Laboucan-Massimo, advocate for Indigenous rights and environmental justice, to be named Canadian Eco-Hero, filmmaker and photographer **Louie Psihoyos (The Cove)** to be named International Eco-Hero, and water warrior **Autumn Peltier** to be named Rob Stewart Youth Eco-Hero

The 20th Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival takes place October 15 to 20, 2019 planetinfocus.org

TORONTO - The [Planet in Focus International Environmental Film Festival](#) (PIF) announced today the recipients of the Festival's 2019 Eco-Hero awards, to be presented as part of Planet in Focus' 20th anniversary edition. The annual awards honour individuals who have had a significant impact on raising awareness of environmental issues. Past recipients include **David Suzuki, Dr. Roberta Bondar, Robert Redford, Margaret Atwood, Dr. Alanis Obomsawin**, and **Col. Chris Hadfield**.

This year the honour of **Canadian Eco-Hero** will go to **Melina Laboucan-Massimo**. The David Suzuki Foundation's first Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Change fellow, Laboucan-Massimo is a steadfast advocate for Indigenous rights and environmental justice, with a practice that considers the interrelation between both concerns. A Lubicon Cree from Little Buffalo, Alberta, Laboucan-Massimo has long sought to expose the impacts of tar sands in her home region, while her commitment to Indigenous issues has extended to work in Brazil, Australia, Mexico, and beyond.

In 2015 Laboucan-Massimo established Sacred Earth Solar (formerly Lubicon Solar), which helps Indigenous communities attain energy sovereignty through the use of solar power. **Laboucan-Massimo** will be honoured at a special launch event for the upcoming 20th edition of the festival, on **Tuesday 1 October** at the The Royal Cinema (608 College St.).

The **2019 International Eco Hero** award will go to Academy Award Winning filmmaker and photographer **Louie Psihoyos**. Trained as a journalist Psihoyos served as a photographer for National Geographic for 17 years. In 2009 Psihoyos released the documentary **The Cove**, which won the Oscar for Best Documentary Feature and was named that year's Best Documentary Feature by the Toronto Film Critics Association. A landmark of investigatory documentary filmmaking - shot in part with secret cameras - the film exposed the practices of dolphin hunting in Japan and has remained an unparalleled work of environmental activism and art-making.

Recent work has included the 2018 documentary **The Game Changers**, showcasing elite plant-based athletes and visionary scientists to change the way people eat and live. **Psihoyos** will be honoured as part of the Festival's closing night gala on **Sunday October 20th**, at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, which will feature a 10th anniversary screening of **The Cove**.

PIF is proud to honour **Autumn Peltier** with the **Rob Stewart Youth Eco-Hero** award, for her work as a clean water activist. Established in 2017, the award honours the memory of late filmmaker Rob Stewart, and is presented annually to a young Canadian environmental activist aged 20 or under. An Anishinaabe-kwe and a member of the Wikwemikong First Nation, in 2018 Peltier spoke at the UN General Assembly on the issue of water protection, and in 2019 the Anishinabek Nation honoured her and raised her up to be the Chief Water Commissioner in her great aunt Josephine Mandamin's role.

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 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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