



**DOC NYC, NOVEMBER 9-16, ANNOUNCES  
OPENING NIGHT FILM *THE FINAL YEAR***

**VISIONARIES TRIBUTE AWARD RECIPIENTS  
HEIDI EWING, RACHEL GRADY, CARA MERTES**

**15-TITLE "SHORT LIST"  
SPOTLIGHTING AWARDS SEASON DOC CONTENDERS**

NEW YORK, Sept. 28, 2017 – **DOC NYC**, America’s largest documentary festival, running November 9-16, announced its Opening Night film will be *The Final Year*, directed by Greg Barker, which follows key members of Barack Obama’s administration during their last year in office. The screening will be followed by a conversation with Barker along with the film subject Ben Rhodes and other senior Obama Administration officials. The film will make its New York City premiere at the festival on Thursday, November 9 following its world premiere at September’s Toronto International Film Festival where it was hailed as “urgent” (*Los Angeles Times*) and “irresistible” (*The Hollywood Reporter*). It’s also among the 15 films on the DOC NYC Short List.

DOC NYC also announced key awards being given at the November 9 **Visionaries Tribute**: filmmaking duo **Heidi Ewing** and **Rachel Grady** will receive the **Robert and Anne Drew Award** for observational filmmaking, and **Cara Mertes**, director of the JustFilms initiative at The Ford Foundation, will receive the **Leading Light Award** for serving documentary in a role other than filmmaking. Previously announced in August were two Lifetime Achievement Awards that will be given to filmmaker Errol Morris (*The Thin Blue Line*, *The Fog of War*) and Sheila Nevins, President of HBO Documentary Films.

The festival unveiled the line-up of its **Short List** section of 15 of the year’s leading nonfiction films released theatrically that are being highlighted for special attention. In addition to screening the 15 films, DOC NYC will hold a **Short List Day** on Friday, November 10 featuring discussions with members of the film teams.

“The sequence of Visionaries Tribute, Opening Night and Short List Day makes a great kick-off to DOC NYC,” said Artistic Director Thom Powers. “They bring together documentary makers from across the United States and abroad for what feels like an extended family reunion.”

**VISIONARIES TRIBUTE AWARDS**

The **Robert and Anne Drew Award for Documentary Excellence** goes to a mid-career filmmaker distinguished for observational cinema. This year’s recipients are the filmmaking partners **Heidi Ewing**

and **Rachel Grady**, who will receive a \$5,000 cash prize sponsored by Drew Associates. Ewing and Grady's latest film *One of Us*, about three Hasidic Jews who are seeking to move out of their insular community, screens at DOC NYC as part of this year's Short List. Their previous films include *Norman Lear: Just Another Version of You*, *Detropia*, *12<sup>th</sup> & Delaware*, *Jesus Camp*, and *The Boys of Baraka*. The award's name celebrates Robert Drew, who pioneered the documentary style that came to be known as American cinema vérité, and his wife Anne, who was his filmmaking partner for more than four decades. The three previous recipients were Dawn Porter, Kim Longinotto and Laura Poitras.

Jill Drew, the general manager of Drew Associates, who helped select the recipient, said, "Every time I see a Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady documentary I learn something profound about the human experience. Their ability to go deep into cultures that are oftentimes portrayed as caricatures goes to the heart of why observational documentary is so powerful and important, especially now. They don't tell us what to think; they show us what it's like."

The **Leading Light Award** for a mid-career professional who serves documentary outside of being a filmmaker will be given to **Cara Mertes**, director of the JustFilms initiative at The Ford Foundation. JustFilms works globally to support artist-led films and new media projects, strengthen organizations and networks for artist-driven content and develop new leadership and resources in this field. Prior to leading JustFilms, Mertes served for eight years as director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program; and another eight years as the executive director of the PBS documentary series POV.

The fourth annual **Visionaries Tribute** will take place at the Edison Ballroom in Manhattan on Thursday, November 9. The Visionaries Tribute is co-presented by Major sponsor HBO Documentary Films, Supporting sponsor National Geographic Documentary Films, Signature sponsor Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Event sponsor NEON.

Tables and individual tickets are available for the Visionaries Tribute event. Please contact Jen Kim at [jen@docnyc.net](mailto:jen@docnyc.net) for more information.

## **DOC NYC SHORT LIST**

The DOC NYC Short List has a history of being a predictor of other awards, from critics' prizes and top ten lists to the Oscars. For the past four years, the DOC NYC Short List had nine to ten titles overlapping the subsequent Oscar Documentary Short List, and four to five titles that were Oscar nominated. For the last six years, DOC NYC screened the documentary that went on to win the Oscar: *O.J.: Made in America* (2016), *Amy* (2015), *Citizenfour* (2014), *20 Feet From Stardom* (2013), *Searching for Sugar Man* (2012), and *Undeclared* (2011).

All of the DOC NYC Short List titles will show during the festival with the director or other special guests present for their first screening. Additionally, most of the directors or other collaborators will participate on Friday, November 10 in the DOC NYC Short List Day of panel conversations.

Admission to the Short List Day is available with an All Access Pass, DOC NYC PRO Pass, DOC NYC PRO First Half pass or Short List Day pass.

Admission to all Short List screenings is included with All Access Passes; individual screening tickets for Short List titles go on sale in mid-October.

**DOC NYC 2017 Short List**

- **ABACUS: SMALL ENOUGH TO JAIL** (PBS Distribution)  
Dir: Steve James
- **THE B-SIDE: ELSA DORFMAN'S PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY** (NEON / Netflix)  
Dir: Errol Morris
- **CHASING CORAL** (Netflix)  
Dir: Jeff Orlowski
- **CITY OF GHOSTS** (Amazon Studios / A&E IndieFilms / IFC Films)  
Dir: Matthew Heineman
- **DINA** (The Orchard)  
Dirs: Antonio Santini, Dan Sickles
- **FACES PLACES** (Cohen Media Group)  
Dirs: Agnès Varda, JR
- **THE FINAL YEAR** (Motto Pictures / Passion Pictures)  
Dir: Greg Barker
- **THE FORCE** (Kino Lorber / PBS Independent Lens)  
Dir: Peter Nicks
- **ICARUS** (Netflix)  
Dir: Bryan Fogel
- **JANE** (National Geographic Documentary Films)  
Dir: Brett Morgen
- **KEDI** (Oscilloscope Laboratories / YouTube Red)  
Dir: Ceyda Torun
- **ONE OF US** (Netflix)  
Dirs: Heidi Ewing, Rachel Grady
- **RISK** (NEON / SHOWTIME® DOCUMENTARY FILMS)  
Dir: Laura Poitras
- **STEP** (Fox Searchlight)  
Dir: Amanda Lipitz

- **STRONG ISLAND** (Netflix)  
Dir: Yance Ford

**Complete DOC NYC lineup and screening schedule announced in mid October. For festival passes, tickets or more information on DOC NYC go to: [www.docnyc.net](http://www.docnyc.net)**

### SPONSORS

The festival is made possible by **Major Sponsors** A&E IndieFilms, Amazon Studios, HBO Documentary Films, History Films, Netflix, **Supporting Sponsors** Discovery, ImageNation Abu Dhabi, National Geographic, SHOWTIME® DOCUMENTARY FILMS, **Leading Media Sponsor** New York magazine, WNET; **Signature Sponsors** Bloomberg Philanthropies, Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, Participant Media, Technicolor-PostWorks New York, The Yard.

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**Friends of the Festival** include Agile Ticketing, Blue Point Brewing, Brooklyn Roasting Company, Essentia, Fox Searchlight, Kickstarter, Kino Lorber, Posteratiti, Screening Room, Shiftboard, Writers Guild of America, East, Wheelhouse Creative.

**Images for *The Final Year* and Visionaries Tribute honorees:**

[bit.ly/2jZkPPw](http://bit.ly/2jZkPPw)

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