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**DOC NYC ANNOUNCES 2020 FESTIVAL PLANS AND PROGRAMMING TEAM,
WITH FINAL SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE EXTENDED UNTIL JULY 8
OPAL H. BENNETT NAMED
DIRECTOR OF FILMMAKER DEVELOPMENT**

**SHOWTIME® DOCUMENTARY FILMS AND TOPIC STUDIOS RETURN AS SPONSORS OF
“ONLY IN NEW YORK” WORKS-IN-PROGRESS AND “40 UNDER 40” PROGRAMS**

July 1, 2020 - DOC NYC revealed early details for the shape of its 2020 festival taking place November 11-19. Now in its 11th year, the festival will continue to bring great documentaries to audiences by moving primarily to an online format for 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As November draws closer, the festival team will re-evaluate the feasibility of holding additional events in person. The 2020 festival line-up will seek to maintain a similar size and scope as in recent editions, aiming to program approximately 100 feature documentaries, along with panels, seminars, and other initiatives. The festival's final submission deadline for features and shorts has been extended to July 8.

The festival named Opal H. Bennett to the newly-created position of Director of Filmmaker Development. The role is part of DOC NYC's core leadership team and will focus on expanding the festival's efforts to support documentary careers and widen diversity in the field through existing initiatives such as the Only In New York section for works-in-progress; the 40 Under 40 list for emerging talent; and the DOC NYC U section for student filmmakers, along with developing new initiatives in service of those goals. Bennett has served for five years as the festival's programmer for Shorts and DOC NYC U, responsibilities she will continue to hold in her new position.

“Opal has been a vital part of this festival for much of our 11-year history,” said DOC NYC Artistic Director Thom Powers. “Having served on the selection committees for Only In New York and 40 Under 40 since the inception of both programs, as well as overseeing DOC NYC U for the past several years, she is the perfect person to lead our efforts to support new voices in the documentary field.”

“It has been an honor working with the DOC NYC team these past five years,” said Bennett. “In this pivotal time, it's imperative that we as an industry prioritize marginalized filmmakers by providing them with the opportunities and support they need. I'm thrilled to expand my work with



DOC NYC to help advance our festival's contribution to a dynamic and inclusive documentary film community.”

Bennett has worked as a festival programmer since 2014 and joined DOC NYC in 2015. She is also on the programming team at Athena Film Festival and is a Program Consultant for The March on Washington Film Festival. She joined American Documentary's POV as Shorts Producer in January 2020. A Columbia Law grad, Bennett holds a Masters in Media Studies from the London School of Economics, and received her B.A. from New York University.

The festival also revealed its 2020 programming team responsible for selecting the festival lineup. Led by long-time DOC NYC Director of Programming Basil Tsiokos, the team includes returning Features Programmers Ruth Somalo, Karen McMullen, and Jessie Fairbanks, joined again by Associate Programmer Brandon Harrison. Shorts programming will again be overseen by Opal H. Bennett, in collaboration with returning Associate Programmers DeWitt Davis and Samah Ali.

DOC NYC is pleased to announce the return of two key sponsors to support special programs in its 2020 edition. For the fifth consecutive year, SHOWTIME Documentary Films will present the works-in-progress program Only In New York; submissions are open through August 17. Topic Studios returns for its third consecutive year to present 40 Under 40, a celebration of emerging talent in the documentary field. Nominations for 40 Under 40 will be open July 7 through August 21. The festival will reveal further sponsors in the coming months.

DETAILS FOR 2020 ONLINE PLANS

For 10 years, DOC NYC has mainly existed as an in-person event taking place in downtown Manhattan. When New York City theaters closed in March, DOC NYC quickly pivoted online for its year-round educational and industry programming to create webinars for filmmakers and to introduce the new Friday Fix talk show, available to audiences around the world. Nearly 10,000 registrants have participated in the 18 events held to date. The festival will draw upon this experience and lessons learned from other festivals that moved online in 2020 to make this year's event the most far-reaching in its history.

The shift to online programming will enable DOC NYC's classes and conversations to reach viewers all over the world in a mix of free and ticketed events. Film screenings will be geo-blocked within the United States on a platform specialized for festival presentations with a limited quantity of tickets available, following the examples of other festivals that moved online for 2020, such as AFI Docs, Hot Docs, and Human Rights Watch Film Festival.



“We are adapting to difficult times, but we’re excited by the potential to reach a new global audience online,” said DOC NYC Executive Director Raphaela Neihausen. “We’re delighted that so many of our returning sponsors are embracing the innovative ways that we are using to connect with filmmakers and audiences.”

The 2020 edition of DOC NYC will feature the festival’s normal scope of programming and events, including:

- Juried sections of new work - Viewfinders, Metropolis, and Shorts
- Awards season contenders - Short Lists and Winner’s Circle
- Non-competitive sections, spotlighting films on music, activism, and other themes
- Visionaries Tribute, honoring Lifetime Achievement and other award recipients
- Only In New York, focusing on works-in-progress
- 40 Under 40, celebrating emerging talent
- DOC NYC U, showcasing student films
- DOC NYC PRO classes and seminars, focusing on professional development for filmmakers at all stages of their careers

The 11th annual DOC NYC will take place on November 11-19. Programming selections will be announced in October. For more information, including submission guidelines and an archive of past programming, visit docnyc.net.

Photos of the DOC NYC programming team are available [here](#).