

For Immediate Release –

WORKMAN ARTS PRESENTS

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

RENDEZVOUS WITH MADNESS FILM FESTIVAL

ANNOUNCING 2017's POWERFUL & PROVOCATIVE LINEUP OF 16 BOUNDARY BREAKING FEATURE FILMS & 2 SHORTS PROGRAMS CASTING LIGHT ON THE MYSTERIES OF MADNESS, MENTAL HEALTH, & ADDICTION

NOVEMBER 3 – 11, 2017

Toronto (October 4, 2017) – The **first and largest** mental health film festival in the world, [Rendezvous with Madness](#), by Workman Arts, proudly presents its **25th Anniversary edition from November 3 – 11, 2017**. The nine-day festival showcases **16 features and 34 short films** from across the globe, including a series of **curated short film programs, vital discussions** and **enlightening exhibitions**. This important and provocative festival uses art to investigate and to illuminate the realities and mythologies surrounding mental illness and addiction. 2017 festival venues include the **Workman Arts theatre, St. Anne's Church, and CAMH**, and as always screening events will be followed by dynamic talks with filmmakers and experts.

This year's festival will kick off with the compelling opening night film and **Canadian premiere of *Mad to be Normal*** (Best International Feature and Audience Award Winner, Galway Film Flead) directed by **Robert Mullan**, a dramatic portrait of the radical Scottish 'anti-psychiatrist' **R.D. Laing** notorious for challenging psychiatric orthodoxy, played by Scottish actor **David Tennant** (*Dr. Who, Broadchurch*) in a turn the Hollywood Reporter called a "**powerhouse performance**" and The Guardian "**one of Tennant's best**" and co-starring **Elizabeth Moss**.

Other highlights include the **International Premiere of *Doctor Feelgood*** directed by **Eve Marson**, a documentary about the controversial Dr. William Hurwitz, who was convicted of over 50 counts of narcotics distribution and was handed a 25-year prison sentence; ***The Girl, The Mother, and the Demons*** directed by Sweden's **Suzanne Osten**, examines how a child can normalize almost any circumstances and is inspired by Osten's own childhood; documentary ***The Blood is at the Doorstep*** by **Eric Ljung** looks at the details surrounding the shooting of a 31 year-old schizophrenic black man named Dontre Williams who was shot 14 times in the middle of the day in a public park; and the **World Premiere** of the Canadian documentary ***Pushback***, by first-time filmmaker **Matthew Hayes**, takes audiences inside 'the warming room', a facility in Peterborough that offers food and shelter, this eye-opening feature looks at what happens during the six months that this safe haven isn't open.

In its 25th anniversary edition, **Rendezvous with Madness** will also present a series of signature film and discussion programmes, including ***Frontiers: Documentary and Alternative Treatment***, which features three short documentaries that introduce new and radically different treatment models experienced and assessed by people in the programs. ***Women on The Verge: Global Shorts on Women's Experience*** is a fascinating and surprising package of dramatic films that introduce women coping with madness and recovery discussing their varied experiences, which share the almost universal encounter of being treated and regarded through the filter of prevailing gender attitudes. Additionally, in celebration of the 25th anniversary, the short program, ***If You Ask Me***, a film project created by **Rendezvous With Madness**, will screen submissions from young people with lived experience with mental health issues from across the country.

This year's **'In Conversation'** event equally addresses the relationship of women and madness through a specifically cinematic lens in ***Inside the House of Psychotic Women: A Conversation with Kier-La Janisse***, a fascinating discussion about the role horror and exploitation films came to play in Janisse's life as she sought both refuge and clarity in the dark

and (often) forbidden world of cinematic horror. Janisse, a Toronto-based critic, author, publisher, and film festival programmer, first documented her relationship to horror films in her pop-culture autobiography *House of Psychotic Women*. At once a fan's tribute to an oft-maligned genre, Janisse's story is also a piercing and rigorous account of how horror reflects and distorts the subjective experience of female madness.

Concurrent to the festival, **Rendezvous with Madness** and Workman Arts will also feature a media art installation, **De-Institute**, featuring local Canadian artists presenting art based on mental health and addiction, examines alternatives to forms of institutionalized care. The exhibition will present four works by Canadian contemporary artists – two established and two emerging; **Brad Neczyk**, a multi-media artist that focuses on patient experience, auto-ethnography, psychiatry, pharmaceuticals and biopolitics; **Jan Swinburne**, a video-sound artist; **Julie Riemersma**, a multi-media and fashion artist; and **Wendy Whale**, a multi-media and visual effects artist.

To wrap it all up, the Festival ends with a multi-disciplinary cabaret and arts party to commemorate 30 years of Workman Arts, and 25 years of the **Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival**. **De Profundis: From the Depths** will feature original music and spoken word, stand-up comedy, film and visual art, and showcase creations from Workman Arts Members working in all disciplines, with an after party that will go into the wee hours of the night.

“For 25 years Rendezvous with Madness has sparked important, and ongoing discussions about mental health, and the crucial interaction between mental health and art.” Said **Kelly Straughan, Executive Artistic Director of Workman Arts** *“In celebration of such an important 25-year legacy, our lineup features powerful films, forums, and installations in order to provoke thought and conversations around mental health and addiction, with the continuous goal of breaking down the stigma which occurs across many cultures.”*

“This year's festival again presents a diversity of narrative features and documentaries from around the world that offer deeply first-hand accounts and international points of view on what we affectionately call 'madness' as well as shedding light on vital disruptions in understanding and treatment of mental illness,” said **Geoff Pevere, Rendezvous with Madness Program Director** *“Film has always been a uniquely insightful window through which to view the subjective experience of mental health – it can immerse you in a characters inner life in a way nothing else can – and of course immersion creates empathy and understanding. In this year's lineup you'll find films about addiction, bipolar disorder, psychosis, depression and relapse, but also stories of men, women, children, institutions, family crisis, clinical experience and people who have simply fallen off the grid, whether by choice or circumstance. I can't wait to share these movies with our amazing audiences and to engage in the conversations that follow – which is really what Rendezvous With Madness is all about.”*

Rendezvous with Madness presents powerful, entertaining and compelling images of mental health from around the world. These diverse viewpoints capture the global discussion surrounding mental health and encourage the breakdown of stigma across many cultures.

Tickets for **Rendezvous With Madness** screenings begin at \$12 per single ticket. To purchase tickets visit: rendezvouswithmadness.eventbrite.ca or call: 416 583 4339. Tickets will also be available for purchase at the venue prior to screenings and limited pay-what-you-can tickets are available for persons on fixed incomes. Matinée screenings are PWYC by donation.

RENDEZVOUS WITH MADNESS Feature Film Line-Up:

OPENING NIGHT FILM

Mad to be Normal Robert Mullan, UK, 2017

Canadian Premiere

The radical Scottish 'anti-psychiatrist' Ronald David Laing, the subject of this compelling dramatic portrait, believed madness was “a perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world,” and encouraged those drawn to his treatment – which shunned medication but embraced LSD – to be themselves no matter what mental turbulence might ensue.

Ballad of the Return Gustavo Rosa de Moura, Brazil, 2016

Canadian Premiere

An intimate portrait of the toll taken on a marriage by mental illness. Is it ever possible that only the diagnosed experience it, what about the spouses and family members who must learn to live with it?

The Blood is at the Doorstep Eric Ljung, USA, 2017

International Premiere

In 2014, a 31-year-old schizophrenic black man named Dontre Hamilton was shot fourteen times by Milwaukee police officer Christopher Manney. Everyone gets to speak their position in this urgently pertinent documentary about race, mental health and societal sanity.

Dr. Feelgood Eve Marson, USA, 2016

International Premiere

A documentary about Dr. William Hurwitz, who was convicted of over 50 counts of narcotics distribution and was handed a 25-year prison sentence.

Godless Ralitz Petrova, Bulgaria/Denmark/France, 2016

Gana (Irena Ivanova in an award-winning performance) is a public health care worker charged with providing assistance the elderly. But Gana seems to need more help than she can provide, and subsidizes her own pharmaceutical habit by stealing from those dependent on her care. Gana badly wants out. But how? And why is digging a hole for ourselves so much easier than crawling out of it?

I Am Another You Nanfu Wang, USA, 2017

Filmmaker Nanfu Wang meets a charismatic young homeless man named Dylan in Florida. Fascinated by the Mormon-raised drifter's decision to live on the street, Wang follows Dylan as he hitchhikes, scrounges, begs and maintains a state of perpetual motion.

I Am Not Afraid Fadi Hindash, Netherlands, 2016

North American Premiere

At once intensely intimate and universal, this is the powerful story of a doctor's intricately complicated relationship with his troubled patient who has struggled with mental illness her entire life, and his decision to assist in her suicide.

Inflame Ceylan Özgün Özçelik, Turkey, 2017

Canadian Premiere

An employee at a TV news station, Hasret has long believed that her parents were killed twenty years ago in a car accident. But then the dreams begin, and with them a gradual unravelling of Hasret's sense of reality. From the outside, it looks like paranoia, but from the inside, it's truth assuming a new form.

Nobody Dies Here Hossein Kondori, Iran, 2016

North American Premiere

A powerful and cinematically suggestive study in the effects of prolonged solitude on the vulnerable mind, ***Nobody Dies Here*** speaks to anyone who has ever been left for too long in their own company.

Pushback Matthew Hayes, Canada, 2017

World Premiere

Set during those six months of the year when the warming room shelter isn't open and refuge is scarce, the film provides an intimate, urgent and unblinking glimpse into the experience – sadly, a universal one – of facing each morning as yet another test of sanity and survival.

Starless Dreams Mehrdad Oskouei, Iran, 2016

At once inextricably rooted in specific cultural circumstances yet speaking to the universal experience of state institutionalization, **Starless Dreams** is a deeply revealing humane study of the limits of the permissible.

The Girl, the Mother and the Demons Suzanne Osten, Sweden, 2016

Canadian Premiere

Inspired by filmmaker Suzanne Osten's own childhood experience, **The Girl, the Mother and the Demons** may seem to cover terrain many films on the family impact of mental illness have already crossed, but with a very significant and illuminating difference: it focuses on the enduring love of a prematurely grownup young girl for the only mother she knows, and the unconditional nature of that bond.

The Light of the Moon Jessica M. Thompson, USA, 2017

Toronto Premiere

For all this culture talk about rape, how often does it really measure its impact? This riveting and illuminating film describes what's it like to live as a victim, and the turmoil that goes on inside the minds and hearts of those who must live with the experience.

Manic Kalina Bertin, Canada/USA, 2017

Bertin's father left a legacy of disorder that the filmmaker is determined to confront, understand and account for. Culled significantly from a wealth of home-made archival imagery. True to his ego, Bertin's father was an inveterate documenter of his own mission. **Manic** doesn't make order of chaos, but it does root the chaos firmly in the soil of a long unspoken-of family secret.

The Transfiguration Michael O'Shea, USA, 2016

A fascinating, disturbing and sometimes heartbreaking portrait of an inner city lost boy trying to make his way – via an encounter with an equally dissociated teenage girl – back to 'normality'.

CLOSING NIGHT FILM

Holden On Tamlin Hall, USA, 2017

International Premiere

With his first feature, filmmaker Tamlin Hall makes a moving dramatic account of a young man living secretly with mental illness. His film is at once a tribute, a study in unchecked mental disorder and a cry for understanding.

A complete list of short films screening with features is available [HERE](#).

RENDEZVOUS WITH MADNESS Short Film Programs Line-Up:

Frontiers: Documentary and Alternative Treatment

If one of the definitions of madness is doing the same thing over and expecting different results, then much of the history of mental health treatment qualifies as crazy. In this program of three short documentaries, new and radically different treatment models are experienced and assessed by the people whose opinion should matter most: those undergoing new methods of treatment. Whether it's a shift toward independence and autonomy in Spain (**Voices Against Stigma**), a reclamation of indigenous practice (**Mistissini Healing**) or a first-person account of surviving one of the more dubious old models (**Browndale**), the films in this program offer a fascinating spectrum of perspectives, testimonies and alternatives to the old (and possibly mad) way of doing things.

If You Ask Me

Earlier in 2017 Rendezvous with Madness issued a call for submissions to young Canadians (18-30) for short film projects about their own lived experiences with mental health issues. **If You Ask Me** helps fight stigma about mental health through sharing first-hand experiences to shift wider perspectives!

Women on the Verge: Global Shorts on Women's Experience

In this fascinating, surprising and provocative package of short dramatic films, we meet a number of women coping with madness and recovery. Their experience is as varied as the human brain itself, but what they share is the almost universal encounter with cultures that persist in treating and regarding women with mental health issues through the filter of prevailing gender attitudes. Here you'll encounter women from around the world whose stories are both specific and all too universal. Our subjects may be anger (*Horizon*), unresolved family trauma (*Ariane*), dementia (*Piano Lessons*), fractured personality (*Fragments of May*) and emerging from silence (*La Chute*), but the larger narrative here is madness and gender, and it's a story that's far, far from over.

VENUE INFORMATION:

Workman Arts Theatre
651 Dufferin St, Toronto

St Anne's Church
270 Gladstone Avenue

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) *daytime screenings
1001 Queen Street West and 33 Russell Street

For complete schedule details visit: rendezvouswithmadness.ca

TICKETING DETAILS:

To purchase tickets visit: rendezvouswithmadness.eventbrite.ca
Or call: 416 583 4339

\$12/general (limited pay what you can tickets available at the door only for persons on fixed incomes)

\$15 opening night film / \$35 with pre-film reception

Pay What You Can: Matinee screenings at CAMH are by donation and fully accessible venues

GET IN TOUCH:

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/RWMFilmFest>

TWITTER: <https://twitter.com/RWMFilmFest>

WEBSITE: www.rendezvouswithmadness.ca

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FESTIVAL INFORMATION:

ABOUT RENDEZVOUS WITH MADNESS

The first festival of its kind in the world and currently the largest, **Rendezvous with Madness** was founded in 1993 and is produced each year by Workman Arts. **Rendezvous with Madness** investigates the facts and mythologies surrounding mental illness and addiction as presented by both Canadian and international filmmakers, as well as by visual and media-based artists. The festival provides filmmakers and artists with opportunities to exhibit work that may not otherwise be seen; facilitates discussion between artists and audiences on these cinematic and media representations; and increases awareness of, and advocacy for, mental health and addiction issues among the broader public.

ABOUT WORKMAN ARTS

For 30 years, Workman Arts' growing audiences have enjoyed evocative and thought-provoking artistic productions that entertain, educate and challenge public perceptions about mental health and addictions, wellness and recovery. Workman Arts is the longest-running multi-disciplinary arts and mental health organization in North America and our member artists have benefited from exceptional training and educational programs unlike anything offered elsewhere in the world.