



OPEN CINEMA's Canadian Pilgrimage Connects Documentary and Community Building. Join the Doc Bus Send-off Party May 29!

May 13, 2013 Victoria, BC - This summer, [OPEN CINEMA](#) founder and program director Mandy Leith will spend four months driving across Canada in her VW Westfalia bus, connecting film lovers, filmmakers and community screening programs. **Get on the Doc Bus** is a pilgrimage to explore our country's documentary legacy during a time of change, share OPEN CINEMA's [innovative hybrid event model](#) and build offline and online community along the way. The goal is to seed a grassroots community screening network to support our struggling documentary industry.

Traveling from Mile 0 BC to Mile 0 Newfoundland, Leith will document the journey with video, photography and a blog, while developing a community cinema database & map. [Get on the Doc Bus](#) has attracted national interest, from HotDocs and community cinemas across the continent. [Point of View Magazine](#) recently confirmed it will publish a 2-part feature on the journey in August and November 2013. A map-based directory and journey tracking website is under construction and will be launched in late May.

Leaving Mile 0 Victoria BC at 9am on June 1st, the Doc Bus will make its first stop in Penticton, BC where the **Shatford Arts Centre** is coordinating a special screening of Tiffany Shlain's award-winning documentary [CONNECTED](#) on June 4th. A concurrent screening in Victoria, BC will be hosted by Jason Guille at **The Sunset Room**; building on OPEN CINEMA's [hybrid event model](#) a post-screening livestream feed and #DocBus tweetchat will virtually connect the two BC venues with Tiffany Shlain joining the conversation virtually. Online viewers can also watch the documentary online via Distrify.

The project has been partially financed by an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign that ended on May 15. The [campaign video](#) recently received high praise from UC Berkeley editing guru and [New Doc Editing](#) consultant Karen Everett: "*Mandy Leith's campaign sizzle reel is so entertaining and clever, it's a great case-study in how to create a crowdfunding trailer.*"

A Send-off Party will take place on Wednesday May 29th 2013, at [Full Circle Studio Arts](#), 1800 Store Street from 5.30-7.30pm. A small launch ceremony will take place at Mile 0 Victoria at 9am on June 1st. The media, filmmakers, doc lovers and the curious are invited to launch the Doc Bus journey in style. Owner Valerie Pusey is offering 10% off Full Circle Studio artwork, clothes, jewelry and gifts. 5% of sales will be donated to support the Doc Bus.



WHAT: Get on the Doc Bus Sendoff Party

WHEN: 5.30 – 7.30pm Wednesday, May 29th 2013

WHERE: Full Circle Studio Arts, 1800 Store Street, Victoria, BC

INFO & VIDEO: <http://www.getonthedocbus.com>

CONTACT: Mandy Leith ph: 250.882.7441 e: GetontheDocBus@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

Get on the Doc Bus is Mandy Leith's brainchild: *"I've dreamed of doing this for years! The documentary industry, and now public broadcasting, is at a cross-roads. It's time to get out there and talk to people; about alternative media, democracy, community engagement and documentary."*

The Canadian-born genre has found itself in the eye of a perfect storm over the last five years, says Leith, who has worked internationally in the industry for over 30 years. The economic downturn has negatively impacted the broadcast industry's advertising revenues, which previously fuelled documentary production in Canada. Dwindling funding, axed documentary strands replaced by reality TV, changing technology, a dearth of political support for the Arts and the question of how to monetize the Internet are all making it hard for documentaries to find funding within the broken distribution model.

Meanwhile, community screening programs like OPEN CINEMA are finding that documentaries are a valuable tool for community engagement and social enterprise. OPEN CINEMA recently wrapped its 100th event and 10th successful season of thought-provoking documentaries in cafe-style venues followed by open forum discussion with invited guests. This popular social justice forum was recently referred to as *"one of Victoria's most successful enterprises"* by Times Colonist entertainment reviewer Michael D. Reid.

In 2012, OPEN CINEMA exponentially expanded its potential by adding an innovative virtual complement to its local program. A livestream feed of the post-screening discussion is coupled with a [moderated Twitter chat](#) about the film's topic, and the option to watch the film online in some cases. The [#opencinema Tweetchat](#) reach has been growing exponentially over the last six months, jumping from 20,000 in October 2012 to 123,000 Twitter followers during the April 24 season finale, (stats via Hashtracking.com). "We're very excited to explore the potential of our [new hybrid event model](#) to connect local community screening events in both a live and virtual space to a large global audience."