

TIFF 2019 PLATFORM PROGRAMME TO OPEN WITH SARAH GAVRON'S *ROCKS*

The World Premiere of the British director's powerful third feature is set to launch the competitive section



Photo Credit: TIFF

TORONTO — The Toronto International Film Festival announced today that the World Premiere of *Rocks*, director Sarah Gavron's intimate, honest, and precise third feature, will open the 2019 Platform programme. The follow-up to her earlier *Suffragette* and *Brick Lane* stars Bukky Bakray in a career-launching role as Rocks, a teenager who suddenly finds herself struggling to take care of herself and her younger brother.

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"Rocks brilliantly reimagines the coming-of-age narrative with a pathos and precision we rarely see," said Cameron Bailey, Platform Co-Curator and TIFF Artistic Director and Co-Head. "Across only two features, Gavron has already proven herself as a distinct voice in world cinema, and we are proud to open this year's Platform section with her remarkable third directorial effort, an affecting celebration of empathy and an urgent reminder of the essential value of friendship."

A film about resilience, joy, and the spirit of girlhood, **Rocks** follows a teenager who fears that she and her little brother will be forced apart if anyone finds out they are living alone. With the help of her friends, she evades the authorities and navigates the most defining days of her teenage life.

"I am so honoured and excited that **Rocks** will open Platform, a section that has included films by some of my recent cinema heroes," said Gavron. "With **Rocks** we set out to collaborate with the young people in the cast, working in a way I have never worked before to create a film that feels true to the contemporary teenage girl experience. Like the London of our film, Toronto is filled with people from all walks of life, and the Festival has – in my experience – the most passionate audiences. It is very special for us to be invited with the cast for their first film premiere."

The film is eligible for the Toronto Platform Prize, an award of \$20,000 CAD given to the best film in the programme, selected by a three-person jury. Named after Jia Zhang-ke's trailblazing second feature, the Toronto International Film Festival's Platform programme champions bold directorial visions.

The 44th Toronto International Film Festival runs September 5–15, 2019.

For film synopses, cast lists, images, the complete 2019 Platform lineup, and more information, see tiff.net/platform

Festival ticket packages start at \$110. Purchase packages online at tiff.net/tickets, by phone (416.599.2033 or 1.888.599.8433), or in person at TIFF Bell Lightbox until August 11 while quantities last.

TIFF prefers Visa.

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TIFF is a charitable cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world through film. An international leader in film culture, TIFF projects include the annual Toronto International Film Festival

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in September; TIFF Bell Lightbox, which features five cinemas, major exhibitions, and learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$189 million CAD. TIFF Bell Lightbox is generously supported by contributors including Founding Sponsor Bell, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the City of Toronto, the Reitman family (Ivan Reitman, Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels), The Daniels Corporation and RBC. For more information, visit tiff.net.

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For more information, contact Daniela Ponce, TIFF Senior Publicist at dponce@tiff.net, or the Communications Department at 416.934.3200, or email proffice@tiff.net.

For images, visit the media site at tiff.net/press.

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TIFF Bell Lightbox, Reitman Square, 350 King Street West, Toronto ON Canada M5V 3X5 416-599-TIFF / 1-888-599-8433

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