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CONTACT

Adrianna Paidas
646-762-8704
adrianna.paidas
@beckmedia.com

Aisha Almada, ITVS
415-356-8383
aisha.almada@itvs.org

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visit pbs.org/pressroom

NEW DOCUMENTARY “LOVE IN THE TIME OF FENTANYL” SHINES TIMELY LIGHT ON A COMMUNITY FIGHTING TO PREVENT OVERDOSE DEATHS, PREMIERES FEBRUARY 13 ON PBS’S INDEPENDENT LENS

NOVEMBER 18, 2022

The Intimate Film Follows a Safe Injection Site in Vancouver as Staff and Volunteers Offer Hope for a Marginalized Community and Work to Destigmatize the Overdose Crisis

(San Francisco, CA) November 18, 2022 — When the number of overdose deaths in Vancouver, Canada, reached an all time high, filmmaker Colin Askey turned the lens on employees and volunteers at a safe injection site, also known as a supervised consumption site, as they work to give hope to a neighborhood often referred to as ground zero of the overdose crisis. Askey’s film, “Love in the Time of Fentanyl,” looks beyond the stigma of people who use fentanyl and other drugs and brings to light the courage of those facing tragedy and providing radical responses to the crisis ravaging their community.

“Love in the Time of Fentanyl” premieres on PBS’s Emmy Award-winning documentary anthology series INDEPENDENT LENS on Monday, February 13, at 10:00 p.m. ET (check local listings). The film will also be available to stream on the PBS Video app.

Askey, who has dedicated his career to capturing the transformative impact of humane policy on the lives of people who use drugs, spotlights the dedicated and courageous staff at the Overdose Prevention Society (OPS), a supervised drug injection site that primarily employs active and former drug users, as they take radical measures to save lives and reduce tragedy in their community.



1435 FOLSOM STREET
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94103
T. 415 356 8383
F. 415 356 8391
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From OPS founder Sarah Blyth, who opened the site without government approval, to manager Trey Helten, a former heroin user who memorializes lost community members with graffiti art, the film centers on the people approaching this crisis with solutions while the opioid epidemic continues to tear through communities all over the U.S.

Taking viewers inside the day-to-day of a safe injection site, Askey also follows supervisor Norma, a beloved Indigenous elder in the community who cooks meals for the staff, and volunteer Dana McInnis, an active fentanyl user who constantly reverses overdoses at work while struggling with his own drug use.

Askey's timely film moves past the stigmatization of injection drug users and walks alongside those most vulnerable in the overdose crisis. "Love in the Time of Fentanyl" shares a deeply personal look at how safe injection sites can provide hope and reprieve for those struggling with addiction throughout the United States, as lawmakers continue to debate legalizing these services.

"As the U.S. now faces over 100,000 overdose deaths a year, I hope this film can provide a window for American audiences into the inner workings of an overdose prevention site, which have been proven to save lives around the world for over 35 years, yet remain illegal in the U.S. under federal law," said Askey.

"I hope that audiences draw inspiration from this beautiful band of misfits who fight with radical compassion and love for their community in a way that we can all learn from."

"Love in the Time of Fentanyl" received Open Call funding from ITVS and support from the Sundance Institute. Monika Navarro ("Lost Souls") serves as producer alongside Marc Serpa Francoeur and Robinder Uppal ("No Visible Trauma").

Visit the "[Love in the Time of Fentanyl](#)" page on INDEPENDENT LENS to learn more about the film.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS:**COLIN ASKEY**

Colin Askey is a filmmaker who focuses on issue-driven content for harm reduction, drug policy, anti-poverty, and social justice organizations. Recent work includes “Haven,” an award-winning short documentary set in Vancouver, about North America’s first prescription heroin therapy program.

MONIKA NAVARRO

Monika Navarro is an independent filmmaker and the senior director of Artist Programs at Firelight Media. Monika has 15 years of producing for public media, from her debut film “Lost Souls (Animas Perdidas)”, which premiered on INDEPENDENT LENS, to producing for World Channel, AmDoc, and the Peabody-award winning PBS series LATINOS AMERICANS.

MARC SERPA FRANCOEUR

Marc Serpa Francoeur is a documentary filmmaker and interactive producer whose work builds on lifelong interests in immigration, diversity, and social justice issues. Co-founder of Lost Time Media with Robinder Uppal, in 2020 they released “No Visible Trauma,” which had its World Premiere at the Vancouver International Film Festival.

ROBINDER UPPAL

Robinder Uppal is a documentary filmmaker and interactive producer whose work builds on lifelong interests in immigration, diversity, and social justice issues. Co-founder of Lost Time Media with Marc Serpa Francoeur, in 2020 they released “No Visible Trauma,” which had its World Premiere at the Vancouver International Film Festival.

SEAN BAKER

Sean Baker is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. He is an award-winning writer/director/producer known for “Take Out” (2004), “Prince of Broadway” (2008), “Starlet” (2012), “Tangerine” (2015), and “The Florida Project” (2017). Sean's latest feature, “Red Rocket,” premiered at Cannes in 2021.

CREDITS

Director
Producer

Colin Askey
Monika Navarro
Marc Serpa-Francoeur
Robinder Uppal



Sean Baker

Visit the INDEPENDENT LENS [website](#) for more information.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT LENS

INDEPENDENT LENS is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series, airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 p.m. ET. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, Action Family Giving, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit [pbs.org/independentlens](#). Join the conversation on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram at @independentlens.

ABOUT ITVS

ITVS is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films, and then airs [them](#) for free on PBS via our weekly series, INDEPENDENT LENS, as well as on other PBS series, and through our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The National Endowment for the Humanities: American Rescue Plan, Acton Family Giving, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit [itvs.org](#).

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