

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

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SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES 2011 CINEREACH PROJECT AT SUNDANCE INSTITUTE GRANTEES

Documentary and Narrative Feature Film Projects Selected for Development, Production and Post-Production Support

LOS ANGELES, CA – Sundance Institute and Cinereach today announced the 2011 projects awarded grants for development, production, or post-production as part of a \$1.5 million, three-year initiative, *The Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute*. The initiative is designed to support documentary and narrative feature film projects with themes that evoke global cultural exchange and social impact, and projects representing emerging and innovative voices selected for their distinctive and personal storytelling. *The Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute* is directly supporting eleven projects, each at a critical moment in their development.

In addition to grant awards, *The Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute* includes core artist support activity at the Sundance Screenwriters Lab, Directors Lab, Documentary Edit & Story Lab, Composers & Documentary Lab, the Creative Producing Feature and Documentary Labs, and the Sundance Film Festival. A total of \$131,000 was awarded to filmmakers in this round of Spring grants.

"It is always incredibly exciting and intrinsically rewarding when we are able to provide financial support to our artists," said Keri Putnam, Executive Director, Sundance Institute. "Our collaboration with Cinereach allows both of our organizations the opportunity to respond to a critical need in independent filmmaking and to have a meaningful impact when it is most needed," Putnam added.

"Adaptability, flexibility, and collaboration are key components of new independent filmmaking models; not only for directors and producers, but also for funders and financiers," said Philipp Engelhorn, Founder and Executive Director of Cinereach. "Cinereach continues to take pride in its Sundance Institute partnership - an opportunity to reinforce these key values through rapid, well-targeted and focused support."

Projects recently selected as Sundance Institute Cinereach Grantees through the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program include:

POST-PRODUCTION FEATURE FILM GRANTS

Compliance

Writer-director: Craig Zobel (Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab Fellow)

Producer: Sophia Lin (Sundance Institute Creative Producing Fellow)

When a prank caller convinces a fast food restaurant manager to interrogate an innocent young employee, no one is left unscathed. Based on true events.

Raised in Atlanta, Craig Zobel is a graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, School of Filmmaking. In 2008, he won the Gotham Award for Breakthrough Director for *Great World of Sound*, his debut feature as a writer/director, which was distributed by Magnolia Entertainment. The film was selected as one of the Top Ten Independent Films of the Year by The National Board of Review, and was nominated for Best First Film, and Best Supporting Actor at the 2008 Independent Spirit Awards.

Producer Sophia Lin's recent credits include Jeff Nichol's *Take Shelter* being released by Sony Classics. Prior production credits include David Gordon Green's *Undertow*, *The Business of Strangers*, and the cult comedy series *Strangers with Candy*. *Compliance* is her second collaboration with Craig Zobel since *Great World of Sound* which garnered the Breakthrough Director Award at the 2007 Gothams.

Porfirio

Writer-Director: Alejandro Landes (Sundance Institute Directors and Screenwriters Lab Fellow)

After years of waiting for his pension, a Colombian man confined to a wheelchair hijacks a plane with his unwitting teenage son in an effort to draw the attention of the President to his plight.

Alejandro Landes was born in Sao Paulo, and holds Colombian, Ecuadorian and Brazilian citizenship. After graduating from Brown University in 2003 and working in the television, newspaper, and film development worlds, Landes made the feature documentary *Cocalero*, which premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival. The film went on to screen at 50 international film festivals and enjoyed theatrical distribution in more than 10 countries. Landes was a Cannes Cinefondation resident in 2009. *Porfirio* made its world premiere in Directors' Fortnight in the 2011 Cannes Film Festival.

Postcards from the Zoo

Co-writer-director: Edwin (Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab Fellow)

Co-writer: Daud Sumolang (Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab Fellow)

After being abandoned at a young age at the zoo, a young woman leaves her magical childhood behind to discover the world outside.

Edwin was born in Surabaya, Indonesia and studied film at the Jakarta Institute for the Arts. In 2005, his short *Kara, Anak Sebatang Pohon* became the first Indonesian short film selected for Cannes Directors Fortnight. Edwin's first feature *Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly* won the FIPRESCI Award at the 38th International Film Festival Rotterdam and the Netpac award at the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival, and has played at over 45 other international film festivals.

Return

Writer-Director: Liza Johnson (Sundance Institute Directors and Screenwriters Lab Fellow)

Home from a tour of duty, a young mother struggles to recover her place both within her family and in the rust-belt town she no longer recognizes.

Liza Johnson's work has been exhibited widely in film festivals, galleries, and museums, including the Berlin and Rotterdam Film Festivals, the Wexner Center for the Arts, the Walker Art Center, Mass MOCA, MIX-NY, and many others. Her short film *In the Air* premiered at the 2010 Berlin Film Festival and *South of Ten* was selected to open the New York Film Festival in 2006. *Return* made its world premiere in Directors' Fortnight of the 2011 Cannes Film Festival.

DEVELOPMENT FEATURE FILM GRANTS

Adelyne

Writer-Director: Holden Abigail Osborne (Sundance Institute Directors and Screenwriters Lab Fellow)

A woman finds her path living a solitary, monastic life in a forgotten corner of rural America, but a warrior of the woods and a family illness force her to reconcile spiritual living with primal purpose.

Holden Abigail Osborne's doc-narrative hybrid *Solitary/Release*, featuring James Franco and Holmes Osborne, premiered at the 2010 SXSW Film Festival. A seventh-generation rural Missourian, former editor, producer for W+K China, and founder of the non profit LiveFree Films, Osborne studied narrative film with NYU's graduate film community. She is currently in production on a series of DIY shorts (including *Up, Up, and Away*, which screened at the 2011 SXSW Film Festival) and may be seen in the title role of the forthcoming short film, *Betty*.

La Raya

Writer-Director: Yolanda Cruz (Sundance Institute Directors and Screenwriters Lab Fellow, Native Lab Fellow)

Destined to follow in the footsteps of the other men in his village, enterprising 11-year-old Papio has his heart set on emigrating north to the U.S.; after an abandoned refrigerator fortuitously appears, he tries to exploit its value to finance his journey, only to find that it may not ultimately be his destiny to leave.

Yolanda Cruz is a filmmaker from Oaxaca, Mexico. She has produced seven documentaries on Native people in the U.S. and Mexico. Her work has screened at film festivals and museums around the world including the Sundance Film Festival, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Park la Villette in Paris, and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, among others. Her work received the Audience and Best Feature Documentary Award from the National Geographic All Roads Film Project in 2005 and the Expresión en Corto International Film Festival in 2009.

Look For Water

Director: Jennifer Phang

Co-writers: Jennifer Phang & Dominic Mah (Sundance Institute Screenwriters Lab Fellows)

A young couple wakes up and literally loses sight of each other; a kidnapper displaces misfit girls to an alternate world; a dowser explores her mysterious ability to find lost objects, and the paths of abductees and runaways intersect in this emotional thriller.

A Berkeley-born daughter of Chinese-Malaysian and Vietnamese heritage, Jennifer Phang is a graduate of the MFA Directing program at the American Film Institute. Her feature debut *Half-Life*, a pre-apocalyptic suburban drama, premiered this year at the Sundance Film Festival, then screened at South by Southwest and the Gen Art Film Festival, receiving the Gen Art Grand Jury Award. Phang got her start as a fellow at Film Independent's Project: Involve, working under the mentorship of director Tony Bui.

Wolf

Writer-Director: Bogdan Mustata (Sundance Institute Directors and Screenwriters Lab Fellow)

In this surreal tale, a young boy's dearest wish is realized when his absent father is quite literally reborn and joins the family once again.

A graduate of the Romanian National Film School, Bogdan Mustata directed the short film *A Good Day For a Swim*, which won the Golden Bear for the best short film at the 2008 Berlinale. The film screened at dozens of festivals and won multiple awards at the 2008 Palm Springs International Short Film Festival. Mustata has lived in Vietnam and Dubai, where he wrote and directed for television. *Wolf* will mark his feature directorial debut.

Projects recently selected as Sundance Institute Cinereach Grantees through the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program include:

DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION GRANT

Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry (U.S.A./China)

Director: Alison Klayman

Ai Weiwei is an international art star blurring the boundaries of art and politics. This intimate portrait follows him over two years and asks: Can an artist change China?

Alison Klayman has been living in China for several years, improving her Mandarin while working as a freelance journalist and documenting the work of Ai Weiwei. She was recently featured on *The Colbert Report*.

DOCUMENTARY FILM DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Untitled Egyptian Film (U.S.A. / Egypt)

Director: Mai Iskander

As the call for social justice in Cairo snowballs into an all out demand for regime change, 22 year old Heba, a greenhorn journalist and democratic activist, is the most aggressive reporter on the scene, but her idealism is put to the test as her country faces the challenges of putting democracy into practice.

Native Egyptian Mai Iskander is a director and cinematographer who received acclaim for her recent feature documentary *Garbage Dreams*. *Garbage Dreams* played in over 100 festivals, has won 26 awards and was nominated for 2010 Best Documentary by the Director's Guild of America.

Remote Area Medical (U.S.A.)

Director: Jeff Reichert

Remote Area Medical will document a weekend-long medical clinic in the rural South. Even though this small town is only a few hundred miles from our nation's capitol, access to proper medical care for many in the region might as well be worlds away.

Reichert's first feature film, *Gerrymandering*, premiered at the 2010 Tribeca Film Festival and was named one of the best of the festival by *New York Magazine* before opening theatrically around the country.

Projects previously selected and announced as Sundance Institute Cinereach Grantees through the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program in December 2010 included:

DOCUMENTARY FILM DEVELOPMENT GRANT

God Loves Uganda (U.S.A.)

Director: Roger Ross Williams

Journey into the heart of east Africa, where a new breed of religious leaders and their American evangelical counterparts save souls and wage war against immorality.

DOCUMENTARY FILM POST-PRODUCTION GRANT

If A Tree Falls (U.S.A.)

Director: Marshall Curry

Daniel McGowan was arrested for being part of the Earth Liberation Front, a group responsible for arsons against timber companies and SUV dealerships. Through his story the film sheds light on two of our most important and timely issues--terrorism and environmentalism.

The Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute supports a unique and flexible resource pool for documentary and feature filmmakers and their projects. The Project consists of a discretionary fund that can be used towards projects by filmmakers that are participating in Sundance Institute's existing Feature Film Program and Documentary Film Program, and are in need of urgent support. As a result of this unique partnership, Sundance Institute is more equipped to bridge funding and creative support gaps at critical stages of its Fellows' projects.

About Cinereach

Cinereach is a not-for-profit film production company and foundation that champions vital stories, artfully told. Created and led by young philanthropists, entrepreneurs and filmmakers, Cinereach empowers fiction and nonfiction filmmakers from all over the world through Grants & Awards, The Reach Film Fellowship, an internal Productions department, and through partnerships with the Sundance Institute and other organizations. Since 2006, Cinereach has disbursed over \$4.5 million in grant funds to more than 90 projects at the intersection of engaging storytelling, visual artistry and vital subject matter. www.cinereach.org.

About Sundance Institute

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a global, nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to nurturing artistic expression in film and theater, and to supporting intercultural dialogue between artists and audiences. The Institute promotes independent storytelling to unite, inform and inspire, regardless of geo-political, social, religious or cultural differences. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival and its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Born into Brothels*, *Trouble the Water*, *Son of Babylon*, *Amreeka*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Spring Awakening*, *Light in the Piazza* and *Angels in America*. www.sundance.org