

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

- FILM FESTIVAL
- FEATURE FILM
- DOCUMENTARY
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Media Contact:
Casey De La Rosa
310.360.1981
casey_delarosa@sundance.org

15 Projects Selected for 2012 Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute Grants

Los Angeles, CA — Sundance Institute and Cinereach today announced the 15 projects that will receive a combined \$200,000 in grants this year as part of the Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute. In addition to grant awards, selected artists receive creative support at a Sundance Institute Lab, the Sundance Institute Creative Producing Summit or the Sundance Film Festival. Each project was identified by the Institute's Documentary Film Program or Feature Film Program.

Keri Putnam, Executive Director of Sundance Institute, said, "Our collaboration with Cinereach allows us to highlight projects representing emerging and innovative voices and to support them at a critical moment. The projects announced today demonstrate truly distinctive and personal storytelling as well as the potential to impact audiences in meaningful ways."

Philipp Engelhorn, Founder and Executive Director of Cinereach, said, "These grantees cover vast narrative, sensory and geographical territory and will no doubt spark dialogue. We're thrilled that our collaboration with Sundance Institute gave us the opportunity to support them as urgent needs arose, keeping their momentum going."

The Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute supports documentary and narrative feature film projects with themes that evoke global cultural exchange and social impact, by providing a flexible and rapidly deployable resource pool at key stages in the life of projects, from development through release. 2012 marks the third year of the initiative. Films that received support in previous years include *On the Ice* (Writer/director: Andrew Okpeaha MacLean), *The Queen of Versailles* (Director: Lauren Greenfield), *Compliance* (Writer/director: Craig Zobel), *Gasland* (Director: Josh Fox) and *Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry* (Director: Alison Klayman).

Recipients of the 2012 Cinereach Project at Sundance Institute grants are:

Post-Production Feature Film Grants

Keep the Lights On

Writer/director: Ira Sachs

The story of a tumultuous, decade-long relationship between two men in New York City. *Keep the Lights On* premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Ira Sachs is a writer and director based in New York City. His films include *Married Life* (2007), *The Delta* (1997) and the 2005 Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize-winning *Forty Shades of Blue*. His short film, *Last Address*, honoring a group of NYC artists who died of AIDS, has been included in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art and MoMA. An Adjunct Professor in the Graduate Department of Film at NYU, Sachs is also the founder of the monthly arts series, *Queer/Art/Film*, as well as *Queer/Art/Mentorship*, a program that pairs and supports mentorship between queer working artists in NYC.

Ma George

Co-writer/director: Andrew Dosunmu
Co-writer: Darci Picoult

Torn between her African culture and new life in America, a woman struggles to please her husband and give him the son that will carry on his family's legacy.

Andrew Dosunmu is based in New York and Lagos, Nigeria. Raised and educated in Nigeria, Dosunmu began his career as a design assistant at Yves Saint Laurent and subsequently became a Creative Director and fashion photographer. Dosunmu's first narrative feature, *Restless City*, premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. His award-winning documentary *Hot Irons* (1999) won best documentary at FESPACO and the Reel Award at Toronto. Dosunmu has also directed episodes of the widely acclaimed South African TV series "Yizo, Yizo" and directed music videos, including for Isaac Hayes, Angie Stone, Common, Wyclef Jean and Talib Kweli.

Fill the Void

Writer/director: Rama Burshtein

Fill the Void is a love story that takes place in the Jewish Hassidic world; a society with strict codes and guidelines for love. Shira must decide between following her heart and fulfilling her duty to her beloved deceased sister.

Rama Burshtein was born in New York in 1967. She graduated from the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School, Jerusalem in 1994. During those years Rama became deeply religious and upon her graduation she dedicated herself to promoting film as a tool for self expression in the orthodox community. Rama wrote, directed and produced films for the orthodox community, some of them for women only. She also taught directing and scriptwriting in various film and television institutions within the orthodox community, including Ma'ale Film School, Yad Benjamin Film School for Woman and Ulpena Arts School, Jerusalem.

I Am Not A Hipster

Writer/director: Destin Daniel Cretton

A young singer-songwriter in San Diego with a growing local following wanders through his apathetic life. When his dad and three sisters show up to spread his mother's ashes, he's reminded of the part of himself he left back in Ohio and is forced to deal with the person he's become. *I Am Not A Hipster* features original song performances and premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Destin Daniel Cretton's fourth short film, *Short Term 12*, won the Jury Prize at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival. He wrote a feature screenplay of the same title and was one of five to win a 2010 Nicholl Screenwriting Fellowship from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. *I Am Not A Hipster* is Destin's feature film directorial debut.

An Oversimplification of Her Beauty

Writer/director: Terence Nance

A quixotic artist hypothesizes about why he feels bad when a mystery girl stands him up. The event prompts him to ask: what's the content of a momentary feeling? The film premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Terence Nance is an artist born and raised in Dallas, Texas. He comes from a family of actors, photographers and musicians. Terence began drawing, acting, and writing music as a young child sitting in on his mother's play rehearsals and his uncles' studio sessions. He studied visual art at NYU, and his art-making practice includes mixed-media installation, music, performance and film. Terence currently resides in Bed Stuy, Brooklyn along with the rest of The Swarm.

Development Feature Film Grants

After the Wedding

Writer/director: Ioana Uricaru

Mara, a Romanian immigrant with a young son, soon discovers her recent marriage to an American is not enough to secure their place in the country. As she learns more about the system, an unfamiliar culture and her husband, she must decide how far she will go to preserve her new family.

Ioana Uricaru was born and raised in Romania, relocating to Los Angeles in 2001. She co-directed the Romanian omnibus *Tales From the Golden Age* (Official Selection, 2009 Cannes Film Festival) and her short film *Stopover* premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. In addition to *After the Wedding*, Uricaru is currently developing the feature *Paperclip*, which was a recipient of the 2011 Sundance Institute/Sloan Commissioning Grant.

Io

Co-writer/director: Clay Jeter

Co-writer: Charles Spano

Co-writer: Will Basanta

Sam, a teenaged girl, is one of the last people on a post-cataclysmic Earth. With the final shuttle scheduled to leave the planet, she must decide whether to journey to the launch point and join the rest of humanity, or remain on Earth, a castaway in the only home she has ever known.

Clay Jeter grew up in Tennessee converting abandoned houses into skateparks and organizing extremely dangerous firework-battles in the outskirts of his neighborhood. After working as a freelance director and cinematographer for a few years in Los Angeles, Jeter returned home to the family tobacco farm in Western Kentucky to direct his first narrative feature film. *Jess + Moss* premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and went on to screen at the Berlinale, among numerous other film festivals.

Will Basanta became interested in visual media at an early age and has worked as a writer, producer, and cinematographer on numerous projects of all types. In 2008, he shot *Bouncing Cats*, a feature documentary about break-dancing in Uganda. His first narrative feature, *Jess + Moss*, premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. Last year he spent three months in New Delhi shooting and producing *Tomorrow We Disappear*, a feature documentary exploring a colony of dislocated Indian magicians.

Charles Spano considers himself a student of the Werner Herzog school of "rogue filmmaking" – an expert at guerrilla tactics, renegade budgeting, and filming in adverse conditions. Spano has studied anthropology, hiked throughout California and the Northeast, bicycled the cobblestone roads of France, backpacked Nicaragua, filmed breakdancers in Uganda, directed in a bulletproof vest (when necessary) and circumnavigated the globe. He lives in New York City.

Ajax

Writer/director: Carson Mell

A band of alcoholic men adrift in outer space become at odds with one another after taking aboard a young woman refugee and discovering the purpose of their mysterious mission.

An Arizona native, Carson Mell moved to Los Angeles in 2002 to write and make films. Since then, several of his short films, including *Chonto* and *Field Notes from Dimension X*, have screened at the Sundance Film Festival. His short fiction has been published in McSweeney's Quarterly Concern and Electric Literature, and his first novel, *Saguaro*, is available at carsonmell.com.

Free State

Writer/director: Etienne Kallos

Set during the annual corn harvest in the Free State, *Vrystaat* explores the rites of passage into manhood for a new generation as they navigate identity and sexuality within the fractured realm of post-Colonial Africa.

Etienne Kallos is a Greek/South African filmmaker with an MFA in film directing from NYU. His work has screened at festivals worldwide, including Sundance, Cannes, Berlin and Telluride. His film *Eersgeborene* was the first Afrikaans-language film to be awarded a Lion for Best Short Film at the 2009 Venice Film Festival. He recently developed *Vrystaat* at the Cannes Cinefondation Residence program in Paris.

Fishing Without Nets

Writer/director: Cutter Hodiernie

Co-Writer: Sam Cohan

Story by: John Hibey & David Burkman

A naïve and desperate young Somali man is coerced to join a band of local pirates as they embark upon a hijacking, but instead of the riches he was promised he finds mayhem and chaos as his reward.

Just before Cutter Hodiernie was born, his parents sold everything they owned, quit their jobs, and bought a 32 foot cutter-rigged sailboat, for which he is named. Accordingly, Hodiernie spent the first three years of his life sailing in the South Pacific Ocean. At age 22, he toured the world with U2 on the biggest rock tour in music history, serving as their 'filmmaker on the road', shooting online content and directing pieces for U2: 360° at the Rose Bowl. At age 24, Hodiernie traveled to East Africa to direct the short film *Fishing Without Nets*, which won the Grand Jury Prize in Short Filmmaking at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Underground Fragrances

Writer/director: Pengfei Song

As Beijing races to keep up with China's growth and its poor are pushed underground to live in crude tunnels, a young migrant worker finds community and compassion, putting a human face on China's rapid development.

Pengfei Song was born into a family of Peking Opera performers in Beijing. After graduating from high school, he went to Paris to study film directing at L'Institute International Image et du Son. Upon his return, he discovered a new China, which inspired him to develop *Underground Fragrances* to reflect the changing lives of the people of Beijing. The project, which will be his first feature, was selected for Cinemart and the TorinoFilmLab in 2011.

Untitled Sicily Project

Writer/director: Mark Jackson

Co-writer: Mary Gaitskill

A war photographer returning from the conflict in Libya where she was held captive retreats to a small town in Sicily.

Named One of Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent film, Mark Jackson was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest. He graduated with a degree in literature from the University of California and went on to pursue graduate studies in cinematography at Rome's Cinecitta' Studios. His first film, *Without* has won multiple awards on the festival circuit.

Mary Gaitskill is the author of *Veronica*, nominated for a 2005 National Book award in the Fiction category. She is also the author of *Because They Wanted To*, which was nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Award in 1998. Her stories and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Esquire*, *The Best American Short Stories* (1993) and *The O. Henry Prize Stories* (1998). Her story "Secretary"

was the basis for the film of the same name. The recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, she lives in New York.

Documentary Development Grants

The Commissioner

Director: Jarreth Merz

As Ghana heads into presidential elections, and democracy and elections on the African continent remain a fragile reality, *The Commissioner* is a man who is about to change the electoral landscape in Africa for the better forever, against all odds.

Jarreth Merz is an award-winning director, producer and actor. His film *An African Election* premiered in the world documentary competition at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. His prizes include the Etat D'Esprit award at the Visions Du Reel Film Festival, the Grand Jury Award at the Atlanta Film Festival and the European Union award for best African film.

The Kill Team

Director: Dan Krauss

The Kill Team tells the story of an American soldier who attempted to thwart U.S. war crimes even more heinous than Abu Ghraib, and who himself is now standing trial for murder.

Dan Krauss is an Academy Award- and Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker, with directing and cinematography credits for PBS, HBO and National Geographic. His work has won awards from the Tribeca Film Festival, The International Documentary Association and the San Francisco International Film Festival, among others. Most recently, Krauss was a Director of Photography for the Academy Award-nominated PBS film, *The Most Dangerous Man in America* and for *Life 2.0*, which premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival.

The Shadow World

Director: Johan Grimonprez

The Shadow World explores the arms industry: a business in which profits are calculated in the tens of millions of dollars, while losses are counted in human lives.

Belgian artist and filmmaker Johan Grimonprez achieved international acclaim with his experimental film *Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* (1997), a collaboration with author Don DeLillo which tells the story of air hijackings since the 1970s and how these changed the course of news reporting. In 2009, Grimonprez made *Double Take*, which targets the rise of fear-as-commodity and was screened at the Sundance Film Festival and Berlin among others - acclaimed by critics as "wildly entertaining".

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 Sundance Institute and other organizations. Since 2006, Cinereach has disbursed over \$5 million in grant funds to more than 100 projects at the intersection of engaging storytelling, visual artistry and vital subject matter. Cinereach production *Beasts of the Southern Wild* opens in select theaters June 27th. www.cinereach.org

Sundance Institute

Sundance Institute is a global nonprofit organization founded by Robert Redford in 1981. Through its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, composers and playwrights, the Institute seeks to discover and support independent film and theatre artists from the United States and around the world, and to introduce audiences to their new work. The Institute promotes independent storytelling to inform, inspire, and unite diverse populations around the globe. Internationally recognized

for its annual Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Born into Brothels*, *Trouble the Water*, *Son of Babylon*, *Amreeka*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Spring Awakening*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Light in the Piazza* and *Angels in America*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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