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For More Information Contact:
Amy McGee
Amy_mcgee@sundance.org/310-492-2333

2008 SUNDANCE/NHK INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKER AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED *New Projects from Europe, Latin America, the United States and Japan Selected*

Los Angeles, CA – Sundance Institute and NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) today announced the winners of the 2008 Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Awards. The four winners were selected from among 12 finalists by members of an international jury which included: Gregg Araki, Jeremy Pikser, Erin Cressida Wilson, Martin Rejtman, Andrucha Waddington, Shekhar Kapur, and Anand Tucker.

These annual awards were created in 1996 to honor and support visionary film directors from four global regions (Europe, Latin America, the United States, and Japan) in realizing their next projects. The four winners are presented with the award at the annual Sundance Film Festival Awards Ceremony on Saturday, January 26.

The winning director from each region will receive a \$10,000 award and a guarantee from NHK to purchase the Japanese television broadcast rights upon completion of their project. NHK is Japan's largest broadcaster with five 24-hour TV and three radio channels. In addition, the Sundance Institute staff will work closely with the award recipients throughout the year, providing ongoing support and assistance in seeking out opportunities to finance and distribute their projects.

The winning filmmakers and projects are: **Alejandro Fernandez Almendras, HUACHO** from Chile; **Braden King, HERE** from the United States; **Aiko Nagatsu, APOPTOSIS** from Japan; and **Radu Jude, THE HAPPIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD** from Romania.

"We are thrilled by the quality and vision of this year's winning filmmakers, all of whom embody what the award is about. In an extremely competitive year, these projects stood out as truly original," said Alesia Weston, Associate Director of the Feature Film Program, International.

"The Sundance/ NHK award is part of the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program's year-round commitment to support singular voices in world cinema," said Michelle Satter, Director, Sundance Institute Feature Film Program. "We expect that the creativity and unique storytelling of this year's four winners will resonate far beyond their countries of origin."

Past recipients of the award include: Andrucha Waddington, THE HOUSE OF SAND (Brazil); Miranda July, ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW (USA); Lucrecia Martel, LA CIENAGA (Argentina); Juan Pablo Rebella and Pablo Stoll, WHISKY (Uruguay); Walter Salles, CENTRAL STATION (Brazil); Chris Eyre, SMOKE SIGNALS (USA); György Pálfi, TAXIDERMIA (Hungary) and Catalin Mitulescu, THE WAY I SPENT THE END OF THE WORLD (Romania). Recent winners include: Lucia Cedron, LAMB OF GOD (Argentina), the opening night film at the 2008 International Film Festival Rotterdam; Fernando Eimbcke, LAKE TAHOE (Mexico) premiering in competition at the 2008 Berlin International Film Festival; and Alex Rivera (USA) will premiere his film SLEEP DEALER in competition at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

The Winners of the 2008 Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award are:

Alejandro Fernández Almendras / HUACHO (Chile) – Set in the Chilean countryside, HUACHO presents a day in the life of a small rural family struggling to adjust to changing economic realities and a modern world that continues to move on without them.

Alejandro Fernández Almendras was born in Chillán, Chile, in 1971. He has worked as a journalist, photographer and film critic, and has lived in Chile and New York. He has directed several short films, including *LO QUE TRAE LA LLUVIA* (2007), which screened at the Berlin Film Festival and was awarded the Casa de Americas prize in the Version Española short film competition; and *DESDE LEJOS* (2006), which won best short film at the Santiago International Film Festival, and best regional work at the Valdivia Film Festival. Almendras is a 2007 Artists' Fellowship recipient of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA).

Radu Jude / THE HAPPIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD (Romania) – When working class teenager Delia wins a luxury car in a promotional campaign, she and her parents travel to Bucharest to shoot a commercial in which she must thank the sponsoring company for the car. As the shoot wears on, the car slowly becomes both the object and catalyst of an absurd clash of desire, values, and will between Delia's cash-strapped parents and her youthful self.

Radu Jude was born in Bucharest in 1977. He graduated in 2003 from the filmmaking department of Media University. He worked as an assistant director for feature films shot in Romania, such as *AMEN* by Costa Gavras and *THE DEATH OF MR. LAZARESCU* by Cristi Puiu. He has directed several commercials and short films including *THE TUBE WITH A HAT* (2006), which won the Short Filmmaking Award at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, the Golden Gate Award at San Francisco Film Festival, and the Best Narrative Short at Los Angeles Film Festival. *THE HAPPIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD* is his first feature film.

Aiko Nagatsu / APOPTOSIS (Japan) – A young woman suddenly loses her job at a publishing company in Tokyo, which is followed by the loss of her apartment, lover, friends and family. She gradually learns to accept her fate, and starts to understand that some things are never lost.

Aiko Nagatsu was deeply involved in the performing arts as she studied drama throughout junior high and high school. At the age of 20, she entered an animation-production company in Tokyo, where she learned two different styles of animation: Disney animation and so-called "Japanimation." She worked in various capacities for many animated films including *MULAN 2*, *PHOO'S HEFFALUMP MOVIE*, and *FLAG*. At the age of 25, she left the company to start her own filmmaking career. *APOPTOSIS* is her first feature film project.

Braden King / HERE (USA) – Measurement and orientation break down in an intensely visual, landscape-obsessed road movie that chronicles the relationship between an American mapmaker and a foreign art photographer who impulsively decide to travel together into deeply uncharted territory.

Braden King co-directed the lyric Aleutian Island documentary, *DUTCH HARBOR: WHERE THE SEA BREAKS ITS BACK*, which had extensive festival screenings and a theatrical release. King has directed music videos and short films for artists including Sonic Youth, Will Oldham, Chan Marshall (Cat Power), Sparklehorse and Yo La Tengo. Recent nonnarrative work includes *HEAVEN IS A PLACE / NOTHING EVER HAPPENS*, a film/video installation commissioned by Chris Doyle for the 50,000 BEDS exhibition at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum; and *[THE STORY IS STILL ASLEEP]*, a multi-channel film, video and live music event that will premiere at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival. His screenplay, *HERE* (co-written with Dani Valent), has received grants and awards from the Creative Capital, Alfred P. Sloan and Annenberg Foundations.

NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) is Japan's largest broadcaster. Since 1925, it has continued to offer fair impartial reporting and high quality programs, earning the viewers' trust as the nation's sole public broadcaster. Through its five 24-hour TV channels (two terrestrial/three satellite) and three radio channels, NHK provides programs of all genres from news and education to sports and entertainment, and serves as the hub of Japanese visual culture. NHK's arts and entertainment satellite channel, which was introduced in 1989, broadcasts more than 600 high quality international films each year. In order to contribute to the development of film culture and the promotion of cultural exchange, NHK is devoted to supporting burgeoning filmmakers who have the potential to guide the industry's future development. Along with the "Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award," NHK also produces the "Asian Film Festival" which offers opportunities to emerging film directors in Asia.

The Sundance/NHK International Filmmakers Award is part of the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program. Since 1981, the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program has supported more than 450 independent filmmakers whose distinctive, singular work has engaged audiences worldwide. Program staff fully embrace the unique vision of each filmmaker, encouraging a rigorous creative process with a focus on original and deeply personal storytelling. Each

year, up to 25 emerging filmmakers from the U.S. and around the world participate in a year-round continuum of support which can include the Screenwriters and Directors Labs, Composers Lab, Independent Producers Conference, ongoing creative and strategic advice, significant production and post-production resources, a rough-cut screening initiative, a Screenplay Reading Series, and direct financial support through project-specific grants and artist fellowships. In many cases, the Institute has helped the Program's fellows attach producers and talent, secure financing, and assemble other significant resources to move their projects toward production and presentation.

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Dedicated year-round to the development of artists of independent vision and to the exhibition of their new work, Sundance Institute celebrates its 26th anniversary in 2007. Since its inception, the Institute has grown into an internationally recognized resource for thousands of independent artists through its Sundance Film Festival and artistic development programs which provide a range of concentrated creative and financial support for screenwriters, directors, documentary filmmakers, composers, playwrights and theatre artists. The original values of independence, creative risk-taking, and discovery continue to define and guide the work of Sundance Institute, both with US artists and, increasingly, with artists from other regions of the world.

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