

# SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

- FILM FESTIVAL
- FEATURE FILM
- DOCUMENTARY
- FILM MUSIC
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## SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES 2009 ALFRED P. SLOAN SCIENCE-IN-FILM AWARDS

**Commissioning Grant Awarded to Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter and Alex Rivera;  
Sloan Lab Fellowship Awarded to Avi Zev Weider;  
Alfred P. Sloan Prize Winner ADAM to be Released by Fox Searchlight Later This Year**

Los Angeles – Sundance Institute announced today the grantees of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science-in-Film Initiative awards, including recipients of the Sloan Commissioning Grant and the Sloan Fellowship. Sundance Institute's Sloan Science-in-Film Initiative supports and celebrates films that explore issues of science and technology.

The 2009 Commissioning Grant co-recipients are **Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter** and **Alex Rivera**. The Sloan Commissioning Fund provides a \$25,000 stipend and resources for projects early in the development phase. Perlmutter and Rivera will each receive a \$12,500 stipend and receive ongoing creative and strategic support from the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program. The 2009 Sloan Lab Fellow is **Avi Zev Weider**. The Sloan Fellowship develops eligible projects at the Sundance Feature Film Labs towards production. Weider attended the 2009 January Screenwriting Lab in Sundance, Utah.

"The depth of this year's work, as it examines the intersection of science and culture is impressive, and we are honored to work with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to offer support to these uniquely talented filmmakers," said Ken Brecher, Executive Director, Sundance Institute. "These awards are integral to Sundance Institute's Feature Film Program which provides year-round support for U.S. and international filmmakers."

"The three talented filmmakers selected this year for screenplay development all show how science and technology affect our daily lives and help define who we are in the here and now, not in some fantastic otherworldly realm. In so doing, they remind us, through captivating stories and memorable characters, that science and technology is the expression of the human spirit seeking to understand and act in the modern world," said Doron Weber, Director of the Sloan Foundation's Public Understanding of Science and Technology Program.

In addition to the Sloan Commissioning Grant and the Sloan Fellowship, the 2009 Sundance Film Festival Alfred P. Sloan Prize was awarded at the Festival to ADAM, directed by **Max Mayer**. The Prize, which carries a \$20,000 cash award, is presented annually to an outstanding feature film in the Festival that focuses on science or technology as a theme, or depicts a scientist, engineer or mathematician as a major character. ADAM, which stars Hugh Dancy and Rose Byrne screened in the Sundance Film Festival's Dramatic Competition. The film was selected "for its credible and moving portrayal of an engineer with Asperger's Syndrome whose passion for science helps him in his struggle to achieve a meaningful relationship." Fox Searchlight acquired worldwide rights to the film, which is scheduled to be released in 2009.

### **2009 Commissioning Grant Co-Recipients**

#### **Bent-Jorgen Perlmutter / ON THE LEFT**

Perlmutter's political thriller ON THE LEFT tells the story of a young Cuban-American designer who travels the world to research human behavior for a large mobile phone company. He becomes embroiled in Cuba's flourishing black market, where he experiences a powerful connection to the unique culture, time, and place that is modern day Havana.

Perlmutter is a New York-based filmmaker. His feature-length documentary film LUMO (P.O.V., 2007) won a 2007 Student Academy Award and the President's Award at the 2007 Full Frame Film Festival. His film LES VULNERABLES (2007), screened as the closing night short of the 2007 New York Film Festival and at the 2008 *Berlinale*.

#### **Alex Rivera / LA VIDA ROBOT**

Based on true events, LA VIDA ROBOT follows the story of four underachieving, high school classmates who compete against M.I.T. in a national underwater robot championship.

Rivera is a New York-based filmmaker and digital media artist. His first feature film SLEEP DEALER premiered at 2008 Sundance Film Festival and won the Alfred P. Sloan Award and the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award. Rivera is a Fellow of the Sundance Feature Film Program Labs, a Rockefeller Fellow and an Annenberg Fellow. His work has been screened at The Berlin International Film Festival, New Directors/New Films, The Guggenheim Museum, PBS, and the Telluride Film Festival. SLEEP DEALER will be released by Maya Films this Spring.

### **2009 Sloan Lab Fellow**

#### **Avi Zev Weider / ZEROES AND ONES**

In Weider's screenplay ZEROES AND ONES, a young woman creates an intelligent machine out of discarded computer parts, and thus completes her grandmother's fractured story of survival at Auschwitz and emerges from her own secluded life.

Weider's award-winning short film, I REMEMBER, premiered at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival. He is currently working on a documentary feature about human relationships to technology, WELCOME TO THE MACHINE. Weider attended the 2009 January Screenwriting Lab in Sundance, Utah as part of his Sloan Fellowship.

### **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation**

This Sloan-Sundance partnership is part of a broader national program by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to stimulate leading artists in film, television, and theater; to create more realistic and compelling stories about science and technology; and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists, engineers, and mathematicians in the popular imagination. Over the past decade, the Foundation has partnered with some of the top film schools in the country – including AFI, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, NYU, UCLA, and USC – and established annual awards in screenwriting and film production and an annual first-feature award for alumni. In addition, it continues to work with leading writer/producers and major studios to create more films, TV shows and TV movies featuring scientists, mathematicians and engineers.

### **Sundance Institute**

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a not-for-profit organization that fosters the development of original storytelling in film and theatre, and presents the annual Sundance Film Festival. Internationally recognized for its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Angels in America*, *Spring Awakening*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Sin Nombre* and *Born into Brothels*.  
[www.sundance.org](http://www.sundance.org).