

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

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SUNDANCE INSTITUTE DOCUMENTARY FILM PROGRAM ANNOUNCES NEW GRANTS

Record Number of Proposals Received for Spring Deadline

Los Angeles, CA – Today, the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program announced documentary film projects to receive grant awards and creative support from the Sundance Documentary Fund. A record number of proposal submissions were received and considered for this round, totaling close to 900 applicants working in 61 countries. 15 feature documentary films in either development or in production/post-production will receive awards. The funded projects include nine U.S. stories, eight female directors and five first-time feature directors.

Films funded tell stories of a cinema restoration project in the West Bank, the revival of an indigenous American language after being silenced for 150 years, a Cambodian journalist's attempt to understand the men and women who took part in the Khmer Rouge Killing Fields, and a citizen journalist in China who uses technology and social networking to report on his country's hidden stories. Several themes also emerge among the selected films: post-Soviet societies in transition, American criminal justice, the intersections between poverty and the environment, and celebrations of creativity and freedom of expression.

"The films funded today reflect the Sundance Documentary Film Program's belief that documentary storytellers are 'first responders' exploring the current global realities we all face," said Cara Mertes, Director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program. "Documentary film is gaining momentum as an international language of cross-cultural awareness and understanding. These artists are at the forefront of the movement."

The Sundance Documentary Fund is a central element of Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program, which provides year-round creative support to nonfiction filmmakers through Creative Labs, work-in-progress screenings, innovative partnerships and international activities in support of contemporary issue independent documentary. Grants are announced twice a year and submissions are judged on their excellence in storytelling, artistic treatment and innovation, global relevance and potential for social engagement. The film selection is juried by a panel of creative film professionals and human rights experts.

Development REGARDING SUSAN SONTAG Nancy Kates (U.S.)

Regarding Susan Sontag follows the life and work of the late author, critic, director, and activist.

STRONG ISLAND Yance Ford (U.S.)

Strong Island is a personal investigation into the violent death of the directors' brother and its devastating effect on her middle class black family.

Production/Post-Production

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Tomáš Kudrna (Czech Republic / Kyrgyzstan)

For villagers of a small town in Kyrgyzstan, the unexpected effects of a massive Canadian gold mining operation complicate understandings of the fall of communism.

AN AMERICAN PROMISE

Michèle Stephenson and Joe Brewster (U.S.)

In a twelve-year study, two African American boys come of age as they attend an elite prep-school in New York City from kindergarten to high school graduation.

ÂS NUTAYUNEÂN– WE STILL LIVE HERE (Working Title)

Anne Makepeace (U.S.)

The Wampanoag nation of southeastern Massachusetts revives their native tongue, a language that was silenced for more than 100 years.

BUDRUS HAS A HAMMER

Julia Bacha (U.S. / Israel / Palestinian Territories)

A Palestinian leader unites Fatah, Hamas and Israelis in an unarmed movement to save his village from destruction. Success eludes them until his 15-year-old daughter jumps into the fray.

CESAR'S LAST FAST

Richard Ray Perez (U.S.)

The private sacrifice and spiritual conviction behind Cesar Estrada Chavez's fight for justice and dignity for America's farm workers is linked to a new generation of organizers leading the charge for farm worker's rights today.

CINEMA JENIN

Marcus Vetter and Alex Bakri (Palestinian Territories / Israel/ Germany)

A Fellini-esque documentary comedy unfolds as locals launch an initiative to reopen the only cinema in the city of Jenin in the West Bank.

COOKED

Judith Helfand (U.S.)

Out of the most traumatic heat wave in U.S. history – when over 730 poor, elderly and African American Chicago residents died in a single July week in 1995 – comes a story about the politics of crisis, the specter of global warming, the long-term disaster called poverty and an inspired plan to address all three at once.

CRIME AFTER CRIME

Yoav Potash (U.S.)

A behind bars look at women in prison and the troubled intersection of law enforcement and domestic violence.

ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE

Rob Lemkin and S. Thet (U.K. / Cambodia)

A young journalist whose family was killed by the Khmer Rouge spends a decade making friends with the men and women who directed and perpetrated the Killing Fields. He finally understands the reasons behind his country's tragedy, but the truth comes at a price.

HIGH TECH, LOW LIFE (Working Title)

Stephen Maing (U.S. / CHINA)

A young former vegetable seller inspired by a search for truth and the potential for fame travels the countryside reporting his observations and discoveries and unexpectedly becomes one of China's first citizen reporters.

IN A TOWN CALLED OIL CITY

Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer (U.S.)

The announcement of the filmmaker's wedding to another man leads to a plea for help from a gay teen and a quest for change in the small Pennsylvania hometown he left long ago.

RUSSIA'S PEPSI GENERATION (Working Title)

Robin Hessman (U.S. / Russia)

Communism's crossover children adjust to their post-Soviet reality in Moscow today.

THE GEORGIAN YEAR

Nino Kirtadze (France / Georgia)

The Georgian Year takes an intimate look at a defining year for this young democracy, from the presidential elections in January 2008 to a state of chaos and war and the resulting aftermath.

Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program is made possible by generous support from The Ford Foundation, The Open Society Institute, the Skoll Foundation, Cinereach, the MacArthur Foundation, The Charles Engelhard Foundation, Wallace Global Fund, The Bastian Foundation, the S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Foundation and the Woodruff Charitable Memorial Trust. Sundance Institute also gratefully acknowledges the generous assistance provided by the following organizations: Alesis Corporation, Apple Computer, Avid Technology, Inc., Hewlett-Packard Company, HP Marketing, JBL Professional, LaCie Limited, Mackie, Mark of the Unicorn, Sony Business and Professional Products, Sony Media, Sony SXR and Soundcraft.

Since 1996, the Sundance Documentary Film Program has supported more than 475 artists in 52 countries, providing a continuum of support throughout the life of a project. Films supported have received widespread distribution to their intended audiences via broadcast and theatrical release, and many have garnered a number of awards and exceptional industry recognition. Films have included *My Country, My Country*; *Iraq in Fragments*; *Born Into Brothels*; *The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)*; and *Trouble the Water*. In addition to the Sundance Documentary Fund, The Sundance Documentary Film Program provides year-round support to nurture nonfiction filmmakers worldwide through three Creative Labs, filmmaker support at the Sundance Film Festival and the Sundance Creative Producing Summit, innovative partnerships including Good Pitch, Skoll Stories of Change and the Arab Fund for Art and Culture, and through collaborative international initiatives. Visit www.sundance.org/documentary or www.sundance.org/DocSource for more information.

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 filmmakers, screenwriters, composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Angels in America*, *Spring Awakening*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Why We Fight* and many others. www.sundance.org

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