

# SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

- FILM FESTIVAL
- FEATURE FILM
- DOCUMENTARY
- FILM MUSIC
- THEATRE

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## **SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF JOHN COOPER AS DIRECTOR, SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL**

**Los Angeles, CA -- March 11, 2009**—Sundance Institute today announced the appointment of John Cooper as Director of the Sundance Film Festival. Effective immediately, Mr. Cooper will serve as the Festival's artistic director leading the Festival's programming and strategic growth, also overseeing activities such as content production, online initiatives and key national and international partnerships. Mr. Cooper previously served as Director, Creative Development for the Sundance Institute and Director of Programming, Sundance Film Festival.

Highly respected by the film community and known for his innovative style, Mr. Cooper joined Sundance Institute in 1989 and has played a pivotal role in both the evolution of Sundance Film Festival and the development of the Sundance Institute's new initiatives. Long committed to diversity and building audiences for independent film, he has pioneered the Institute's expansion of cinematic storytelling by fostering the development of New Frontier on Main, the intersection of contemporary artists with technology and the moving image; boosted the Festival's now content-rich website, enabling a virtual Festival experience for film lovers all over the world; and led the distribution of short films through strategic relationships with iTunes, Netflix and Xbox 360 platforms. Last year Mr. Cooper was instrumental in engaging Blue State Digital, architects of President Obama's groundbreaking online campaign, to connect with the Institute's film and theater alumni, enhancing donor communication, and the recruitment of new Institute and Festival supporters. In addition to programming the popular *Sundance Institute at BAM* series, since 2005 Mr. Cooper has spearheaded *The Sundance Institute Art House Project*, a national initiative of 18 art houses from across the country designed to connect regional audiences to the Sundance's films and filmmakers.

Robert Redford, Sundance Institute President and Founder said, "When we established the Festival, it was always with two goals in mind: supporting new artists and inspiring new audiences. Cooper has never lost sight of these goals. He brings to the position an infectious enthusiasm as well as a deep understanding of the Sundance brand and culture. Forward thinking, he is a natural choice of succession to lead the Festival into the 21st century."

Added Ken Brecher, Executive Director of the Sundance Institute, "The Trustees and I are very pleased that Cooper has agreed to serve as the Festival's new director. To have such an innovative leader who is very much in tune with the needs and interests of today's filmmakers is invaluable."

"This is a tremendous opportunity not just for me but for the entire programming team," Mr. Cooper said. "Our industry is at a crossroads: innovative technology and global accessibility are making filmmaking wildly creative while, at the same time, traditional funding and distribution models are being challenged. Never has our Festival been more relevant. I am honored to accept this position and ready to get to work on shaping the Festival of the future."

### **Sundance Film Festival**

The Sundance Film Festival is the premier showcase for U.S. and international independent film, held each January in and around Park City, Utah. Presenting dramatic and documentary feature-length films in seven distinct categories, and a selection of international short films each year, the Sundance Film Festival has introduced American audiences to some of the most ground-breaking films of the past two decades, including *sex, lies, and videotape*, *Maria Full of Grace*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Trouble the Water* and *Little Miss Sunshine*.

### **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* and *Born into Brothels*.

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