

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

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SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KEN BRECHER

LOS ANGELES, CA -- Wally Weisman, Chair of the Board of the Sundance Institute, today announced the resignation of Ken Brecher, Executive Director of the Institute, effective April 30, 2009. Weisman stated that Ken Brecher had led the Institute for nearly 14 years through a period of significant growth, productivity and global impact. Brecher will assume the role of *Strategic Advisor* for the Institute for the next two years.

Recruited by Robert Redford in 1996, Brecher is a national and international leader in the arts and came to Sundance having been a foundation president, a museum director, and an artistic director in the theater. Brecher commented, "I have completed my work in building an outstanding leadership team. I could not be more confident that the Institute is now poised for the next phase of its innovative work in supporting independent artists."

Brecher's primary responsibility has been the Institute's core programs. Under his leadership, among other activities, the Feature Film Program began its work in the Middle East supporting regional film artists. Now in its fifth year, this annual program serves participants from all over the region.

Brecher was a key participant in establishing the Sundance Institute's Documentary Fund. Working in more than 50 countries, it is one of the largest human rights, civil rights and freedom of expression documentary funds. It has supported films such as Academy Award nominees and winners *Born into Brothels*, *Iraq in Fragments*, and *Trouble the Water*.

Brecher also reconceived the Composers Lab and expanded the Institute's support of film composers through the creation of the Sundance Institute Film Music Program. During his tenure, the Playwrights Retreat evolved into the acclaimed Sundance Theatre Program, which is one of the American theatre's preeminent year-round developmental programs. The Sundance Theatre Program has supported plays nominated for more than 24 Tony Awards including *Spring Awakening*, *Passing Strange*, *I Am My Own Wife* and *Grey Gardens*. Brecher also established the Sundance Collection at UCLA where the history of independent film is preserved and conserved in perpetuity. The Collection now contains over 200 films thought to be among the seminal works of this genre. In addition, the Sundance Film Festival expanded its commitment to documentary and world cinema film, and nurtured its New Frontier program as the intersection of art, technology and the moving image.

Brecher has been responsible for establishing the Institute's strong and diverse base of support for the \$26 million annual operating budget. He has attracted major grants from The Ford Foundation, The Mellon Foundation, The Doris Duke Foundation, The Open Society Institute, The Annenberg Foundation and The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, among others.

"Brecher's efforts," Weisman said, "will stand the Institute in good stead in the years ahead." A search for a successor to Brecher will be commenced in the near term.

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 *Sin Nombre*. www.sundance.org.

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