

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2009

Media Contact:

Amy McGee
(310) 360-1981
amy_mcgee@sundance.org

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE DOCUMENTARY FILM PROGRAM ANNOUNCES FALL 2009 GRANTS

23 Nonfiction Film Projects Selected From Filmmakers Working Around the World Including in Afghanistan, El Salvador, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Vietnam

Los Angeles, CA – Sundance Institute today announced 23 film projects awarded grants across four funding categories which will receive financial and creative support from the Sundance Documentary Film Program. Three of the 23 projects are the first films to receive a grant from the Sundance Reach Fund, part of the Cinereach Project at the Sundance Institute. The Sundance Reach Fund provides emergency discretionary grants and support for risk-taking features and documentaries that evoke global cultural exchange and social impact.

Nearly 500 filmmakers working in more than 50 countries submitted projects. The awardees include six first-time feature directors and 11 female filmmakers making either their first or second feature documentary film, complemented by established filmmakers including national and international award winners. The Sundance Documentary Film Program supports U.S. and international documentary filmmakers exploring the critical issues of our time in films with cinematic potential.

"The films funded in this round highlight the inner struggles of ordinary individuals to come to terms with global issues," said Cara Mertes, Director of the Sundance Documentary Film Program. "From local efforts at truth and reconciliation to a war criminal on a mission of forgiveness, to young soldiers returning to every day life in small town America, nonfiction storytellers are leading us down new paths as we search for common ground." Artists in this round are working in Afghanistan, China, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Indie, Palestinian Territories, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and United States.

The Sundance Institute Documentary Fund is a core activity of Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program, which provides year-round creative support to nonfiction filmmakers through creative labs, work-in-progress screenings, program staff and advisor consultations, and artist-to-artist community. Proposals are accepted twice a year, and submissions are judged on their approach to storytelling, artistic treatment and innovation, subject relevance and potential for social engagement. The Sundance Institute Documentary Program considers projects in the Development, Production/Post-Production and Audience Engagement phases. The film selection is juried by creative film professionals and human rights experts. Next deadlines are February 9 and July 7, 2010. Please visit www.sundance.org/documentary or www.sundance.org/DocSource for more information.

DEVELOPMENT:

Rosa Rogers

CASABLANCA CALLING / United Kingdom, Morocco
Morocco's first female Muslim leaders set out to change their country.

Dara Kell

DEAR MANDELA / U.S.A., South Africa

Dear Mandela chronicles the year leading up to the 2010 Soccer World Cup through the eyes of three young leaders in South Africa's Shack Dwellers Movement as they face mass evictions, assassination attempts and a betrayal of the promises that came with the end of apartheid.

Laura Dunn

FORTY PANES / U.S.A.

This is a portrait of the world as lensed through the works of farmer, writer and activist Wendell Berry.

Bernardo Ruiz

GARDENS OF PARADISE / U.S.A. Mexico

A series of interconnected stories illuminate the challenges facing the residents of Mexicali, a Mexican border city.

Kavita Pillay

MY GOOD NAME IS STALIN / U.S.A., India

My Good Name Is Stalin is the story of two young men named Stalin and Lenin in Kerala, India--home to the world's first democratically elected communist government--as they struggle to reconcile their shifting notions about communism and capitalism in the Age of Migration.

Mais Darwazah

MY LOVE AWAITS ME BY THE SEA / Jordan

A woman takes a journey back to her Palestine. She meets Hasan, her imaginary lover, and through his fantasy world she finds the remnants of hope in characters living a harsh reality.

PRODUCTION / POST-PRODUCTION:

Jennifer Arnold

A SMALL ACT / U.S.A.

A young Kenyan's life is changed dramatically when his education is sponsored by a Swedish stranger.

Elinyisia Masha

UNTITLED TANZANIA PROJECT / Tanzania, U.S.A.

Untitled Tanzania Project follows several compelling characters to explore the impact and progress of foreign investment in Tanzania during the lead up to the 2010 elections and the 50th anniversary of independence.

Carol Dysinger

CAMP VICTORY, AFGHANISTAN / U.S.A.

Using almost 300 hours of footage shot over the course of three years, *Camp Victory, Afghanistan* tells the story of the Afghan officers charged with building a new Afghan National Army and the U.S. National Guardsmen sent to mentor them.

Maria Teresa Rodriguez

DONDE ESTAN? / U.S.A., El Salvador

Margarita Zamora, an investigator and a survivor of the civil war in El Salvador, tracks down disappeared children and reunites them with their families. Miguel Morales and Jenny Wolf- two disappeared children now residing in the US- represent the war's legacy of unemployment, violence and migration, a legacy that civil society -- and the new Salvadoran government -- is struggling to address.

Qi Zhao

FALLEN CITY / China

Fallen City explores the depths of solitude, fear, and loss experienced by the survivors of the earthquake in Beichuan, China.

Sara Terry

FAMBUL TOK / U.S.A.

Victims and perpetrators of Sierra Leone's brutal war come face to face in an unprecedented reconciliation program of grassroots truth-telling and forgiveness ceremonies. This film will change the way viewers think about Africa, forcing them to examine their own lives – and what the power of forgiveness can accomplish.

Elizabeth Mandel and Beth Davenport

ROSE AND NANGABIRE / U.S.A.

Rose Mapendo lost her family and home to the ethnic violence that engulfed the Democratic Republic of Congo, yet she emerged from the suffering advocating peace and reconciliation. But after helping numerous survivors to recover and rebuild their lives, there is one person Rose must still teach to forgive – her daughter Nangabire.

Rachel Libert and Tony Hardmon

SEMPER FI: ALWAYS FAITHFUL / U.S.A.

A retired Marine fights for justice on behalf of U.S. soldiers and their families exposed to toxic drinking water.

Henry Corra

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MCKINLEY NOLAN / U.S.A.

US Army Private McKinley Nolan vanished forty years ago in Vietnam on the Cambodian frontier. Some say he was captured, some say he was a traitor, others claim he was killed in the Khmer Rouge genocide, and some even say he was an American operative. In 2005 a Vietnam Vet sighted him alive by near Tay Ninh, Vietnam. *The Disappearance of McKinley Nolan* follows one family's journey into the heart of darkness to find the truth.

Daniele Anastasion and Eric Strauss

THE REDEMPTION OF GENERAL BUTT NAKED / U.S.A.

Joshua Milton Blahyi, an African warlord turned Christian preacher, attempts to rebuild the shattered lives of those he commanded and brutalized during the civil war in Liberia.

Mahmoud Al Massad

THIS IS MY PICTURE WHEN I AS DEAD / Jordan

In 1983, 4 year-old Bashir is killed during the assassination of his father. The boy comes back to life to dig through his past.

Heather Courtney

WHERE SOLDIERS COME FROM / U.S.A.

Capturing the four-year journey of best friends Dominic and Cole from teenagers stuck in their town, to soldiers in Afghanistan, to young veterans starting a new life, *Where Soldiers Come From* is an intimate look at the young men who fight our wars, and the unspoken class system that sends them.

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT:

Rebecca Cammisa

WHICH WAY HOME / U.S.A.

Thousands of children, fifteen hundred miles, and one dream: reaching the U.S.A.

DISCRETIONARY:

Gemma Atwal

MARATHON BOY / United Kingdom, India

The story of the youngest marathon runner ever. At four he's plucked from the poverty of an Indian slum by his coach. Extraordinary drama and tragedy ensue.

SUNDANCE REACH FUND:

Michael Brown

25 TO LIFE / U.S.A.

After 25 years of secrecy, William Brawner is finally ready to tell the world that he's HIV-Positive.

Josh Fox

GASLAND / U.S.A.

The largest domestic natural gas drilling boom in history has swept across the United States, which uses a Halliburton-developed drilling technology called "fracking." But is fracking safe? When filmmaker Josh Fox is asked to lease his land for drilling, he embarks on a cross-country odyssey uncovering a trail of secrets, lies and contamination.

Blair Doroshwalther

THE FIRE THIS TIME / U.S.A.

Seven young African American lesbians were attacked in the West Village of NYC in 2006. They defended themselves and were sent to prison.

Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program is made possible by generous support from The Ford Foundation, Open Society Institute, the Skoll Foundation, The Charles Engelhard Foundation, Cinereach, the MacArthur Foundation, the S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Foundation, the Woodruff Charitable Memorial Trust and the Bastian Foundation. 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.

Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program

The Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program is dedicated to supporting U.S. and international feature documentary films that focus on current human rights issues, social justice, civil liberties, and other contemporary issues. Since 1996, the Sundance Documentary Fund has supported more than 450 artists in 52 countries, providing a continuum of support throughout the life of a project. Films supported by the Fund 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*; *Why We Fight*; *The Inner Tour*; *The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)*; and *Traces of the Trade*. In addition to the Fund, The Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program provides year-round support to nurture nonfiction filmmakers worldwide through three Creative Labs, at the Sundance Film Festival and the Sundance Independent Producers Conference, and through collaborative international initiatives. Please 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 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*, *Born into Brothels* and *Trouble the Water*. www.sundance.org.