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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 26, 2010

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SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES 13 PROJECTS FOR 2010 JUNE DIRECTORS AND SCREENWRITERS LABS

Selected filmmakers represent significant new voices in independent cinema, telling distinctive stories that embrace diversity in approach and content, and reflect each filmmaker's singular vision

Los Angeles, CA — Sundance Institute today announced the 13 projects selected for its annual June Directors and Screenwriters Labs, taking place at the Sundance Resort in Utah June 1-25, 2010. Under the leadership of Michelle Satter, Director of the Sundance Feature Film Program, and the artistic direction of Gyula Gazdag, the projects selected for this year's program include emerging filmmakers and projects from the United States, Ireland, the Middle East, Romania, Spain and Uzbekistan. The core of the Feature Film Program, these Labs provide an opportunity for filmmakers to develop distinctive new work under the guidance of accomplished Creative Advisors in an environment that encourages innovation, collaboration and risk-taking.

The projects and participants selected for the **Directors Lab** from June 1-19 are:

- **40 Days of Silence**/Saodat Ismailova (writer/director), *Uzbekistan*
- **Bluebird**/Lance Edmands (writer/director), *USA*
- **Drunktown's Finest**/Sydney Freeland (writer/director), *USA*
- **Martha Marcy May Marlene**/Sean Durkin (writer/director), *USA*
- **My Favorite Nightmare**/Myna Joseph (writer/director), *USA*
- **The Perfect Moment**/Ondi Timoner (director) and Bruce Goodrich (writer), *USA*
- **The Ruined Cast**/Dash Shaw (writer/director), *USA*
- **Shelter**/Kasem Kharsa (writer/director), *Egypt/USA*

The Directors Lab Fellows will be joined at the **Screenwriters Lab** from June 20-25 by the following projects and participants:

- **Aqui Y Allí (Here and There)**/Antonio Mendez Esparza (writer/director), *Spain/USA*
- **Nobody Walks**/Ry Russo-Young (co-writer/director) and Lena Dunham (co-writer), *USA*
- **Run and Jump**/Steph Green (co-writer/director) and **Ailbhe** Keogan (co-writer), *Ireland/ USA*
- **Wolf**/Bogdan Mustata (writer/director), *Romania*
- **Zero Motivation**/Talya Lavie (writer/director), *Israel*

"In an increasingly complex landscape for independent films, we recognize the need for sustained support for filmmakers through every phase of the process. The June Lab is the centerpiece of a year-round system of residencies, grants, and tailored creative and strategic support which begins with script development and continues all the way through to engaging audiences on multiple platforms," said Satter. "This year, we're thrilled to support a great diversity of artists, including an exciting group of emerging women filmmakers and several established artists from other forms developing their first fiction features. Each Fellow is exploring contemporary issues in authentic, human, and stylistically unique ways."

Over the course of the Directors Lab, the Fellows work with an accomplished group of Creative Advisors and professional production crews, shooting and editing key scenes from their screenplays. Through this intense, hands-on process, the Fellows workshop text, collaborate with actors, and find a visual language for their film in an atmosphere where experimentation is encouraged. Directors Lab Fellows also join in the week-long Screenwriters Lab with five additional projects to participate in individualized story sessions under the guidance of established screenwriters.

Gyula Gazdag will serve as Artistic Director of the Directors Lab. This year's Creative Advisors include Robert Redford, Allison Anders, John August, Ronan Bennett, Walter Bernstein, Caleb Deschanel, John Gatins, Michael Goldenberg, Keith Gordon, Randa Haines, Ed Harris, Michael Hoffman, Elizabeth Kling, Christine Lahti, Doug McGrath, Peter Medak, Walter Mosley, Jeremy Pikser, Howard Rodman, Ira Sachs, Susan Shilliday, Brad Silberling, Elena Soarez, Stewart Stern, Joan Tewkesbury, Audrey Wells, and Tyger Williams.

The participants and projects selected for the 2010 Directors Lab are:

40 Days of Silence/Saodat Ismailova (writer/director), *Uzbekistan*: Four generations of women under one roof in Uzbekistan look to each other for comfort as they try to overcome their destinies.

Saodat Ismailova was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where she graduated from the Tashkent State Art Institute, Cinema Department. She was invited to Fabrica, Benetton's communication research centre in Italy. In 2005, she was a part of the Artists-in-Berlin program of the DAAD. Since 2004, Ismailova has been in charge of documentary films on the music of Central Asia for Smithsonian Folkways, the non-profit record label of the Smithsonian Institute. She has made three short films which screened in international film festivals, including the award-winning documentary *Aral: Fishing in an Invisible Sea*.

Bluebird/Lance Edmands (writer/director), *USA*: In the frozen woods of an isolated Maine logging town, one woman's tragic mistake leads to unexpected consequences, shattering the delicate balance of her community.

Born and raised in Maine, **Lance Edmands** graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. His award-winning short film *Vacationland* screened in dozens of film festivals worldwide, including the Student Academy Awards. Edmands also works as a film editor, recently completing the features *Wild Combination: A Portrait of Arthur Russell* and *Tiny Furniture*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at SXSW 2010, as well as several national commercial campaigns. *Bluebird* will mark his feature debut as writer/director.

Drunktown's Finest/Sydney Freeland (writer/director), *USA*: Three Native Americans—a rebellious father-to-be, a devout Christian, and a promiscuous transsexual—find their self-images challenged, and ultimately strengthened, as they come of age on an Indian reservation.

Born and raised in New Mexico, **Sydney Freeland** is a 2009 Sundance Institute Native Lab fellow, a 2008 Disney Fellowship semi-finalist, and a 2007 Disney Scholarship recipient. She has an MFA in film and a BFA in computer animation. Freeland received a Fulbright scholarship in 2004 for a field study of indigenous peoples in Ecuador. She currently splits her time between Los Angeles and New Mexico.

Martha Marcy May Marlene/Sean Durkin (writer/director), *USA*: Haunted by painful memories and increasing paranoia, a damaged woman struggles to re-assimilate with her family after fleeing an abusive cult.

Sean Durkin wrote and directed the short film *Mary Last Seen*, which premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival. He was a producer on the feature *Afterschool*, for which he received an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best First Feature. *Afterschool* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and was released theatrically by IFC. Durkin is a graduate of the NYU Film Program and co-founder of Borderline Films. *Martha Marcy May Marlene* will mark his feature directorial debut.

My Favorite Nightmare/Myna Joseph (writer/director), *USA*: A willful teenager, pregnant with her cousin's child, travels to New York for an abortion, only to discover that her unpredictable father has followed her.

Myna Joseph completed her MFA in film at Columbia University. Her thesis short film *MAN* was an official selection of the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, Directors' Fortnight at Cannes, SXSW, and New Directors/ New Films at Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art. The film received the Grand Jury Prize for Best Short at numerous festivals including Florida Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival and CineVegas. Joseph recently served as line producer on Eric Mendelsohn's *Three Backyards*, starring Edie Falco, and co-produced *Pressure Cooker*, a documentary feature broadcast on BET.

The Perfect Moment/Ondi Timoner (director) and **Bruce Goodrich** (writer), *USA*: A compelling look at the life of notorious New York photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, *The Perfect Moment* chronicles his extraordinary relationships, his complex, tortured sexuality, and illuminates the impact his singular art made on our culture.

Ondi Timoner is the only filmmaker to win the Documentary Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival twice. Her most recent winner, *We Live in Public*, has been acquired into the permanent collection of MoMA, joining her critically acclaimed 2004 Sundance-winning documentary *Dig!* Other credits include the documentaries *Join Us* and *The Nature of the Beast* and the short film *Recycle*, which premiered at Sundance in 2006. *The Perfect Moment* will mark her fiction feature directorial debut.

Bruce Goodrich is the writer of *Wildley Earnest!* (A Play With Music), about Oscar Wilde, and the play *Traces of Utopia*. He also wrote the book and lyrics for the musical *Johnny Spots*, which is being developed under the aegis of Disney's Hollywood Records. Goodrich served as executive producer on the short film *Fun With Benny*, distributed by Whatnot Productions. In addition to his writing projects, he is also a theatrical designer, with many New York and regional credits to his name.

***The Ruined Cast*/Dash Shaw** (writer/director), *USA*: Told with hand-drawn animation, a disconnected family is thrown into chaos when the scientist father loses the test subject of his experiment with appearance-altering technology.

Dash Shaw is the cartoonist of *BodyWorld* (2010 Pantheon Books) and *Bottomless Belly Button* (2008 Fantagraphics Books.) He recently created *The Unclothed Man in the 35th Century A.D.*, a series of animated shorts for ifc.com, and a book of the same title collecting his comic short stories. A prolific cartoonist and animator, Shaw was born in Los Angeles, and currently lives in Brooklyn.

***Shelter*/Kasem Kharsa** (writer/director), *Egypt/USA*: When an Iraqi refugee is wrongfully accused of war crimes, he must piece together his muddled memories in order to save himself, unaware that one of his victims, a Gypsy orphan, is slowly hunting him down.

Kasem Kharsa is an Egyptian-American who spent his childhood between the United States and Middle East. He parlayed his training as a design engineer and mixed-media painter into his present-day career as a writer/director. He is currently a MFA candidate at RSICA, the Middle East's only regional film production graduate program. He is also an alumnus of the Rawi/Sundance Institute Middle East Screenwriters' Lab and Berlinale Talent Campus and recipient of the Cort-Swedlin Development Grant for *Shelter*, which will mark his feature debut.

The participants and projects joining the directors at the 2010 June Screenwriters Lab are:

***Aqui Y Alli (Here and There)*/Antonio Méndez Esparza** (writer/director), *Spain/USA*: In this unexpected take on the traditional immigrant story, a man returns home to his small village in Mexico, hoping desperately to make enough of a living there to support his family and avoid an uncertain future back in the United States.

Antonio Méndez Esparza received his MFA from Columbia University. In 2009, his short film *Una y Otra Vez* played numerous international film festivals and gathered several awards, including the Best Narrative Short in the Los Angeles Film Festival, first prize in the Concurso de Cortometrajes Versión Española, and the DGA Student Award for Best Latino Filmmaker - East Coast. *Aqui Y Alli*, which will mark his feature directorial debut, recently received support from Cinereach.

***Nobody Walks*/Ry Russo-Young** (co-writer/director) and **Lena Dunham** (co-writer), *USA*: When a driven young artist invades the home and family of a Hollywood sound designer helping her finish her first film, their professional connection triggers a sexual and emotional entanglement that lays bare the needs, narcissism, and questionable morality of everyone involved.

Ry Russo-Young's second feature film, *You Won't Miss Me*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and went on to win a 2009 Gotham Award. Her debut feature, *Orphans*, received a Jury Prize at the 2007 SXSW Film Festival and is now available through Netflix and Amazon. Russo-Young's films have screened at the Tribeca Film Festival, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, MoMA and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, among others. She currently resides in New York.

Lena Dunham's first feature, *Creative Nonfiction*, premiered at SXSW 2009; her latest, *Tiny Furniture*, premiered in competition at SXSW 2010 and won the Jury Prize for Best Narrative and the Chicken & Egg Award for Best Emerging Female Director. She has made two webseries, *Tight Shots* and *Delusional Downtown Divas*, and a short film, *Dealing*, which premiered at the Slamdance Film Festival.

Run and Jump/Steph Green (co-writer/director) and **Alibhe Keogan** (co-writer): When her husband returns home after suffering a stroke that has left his personality fundamentally changed, a spirited Irish woman struggles to rebuild her family while finding comfort in an American ethnographer sent to document the recovery process.

Steph Green is the writer/director of *New Boy*, a short film based on a Roddy Doyle short story, which won more than 25 film festivals and was nominated for a 2009 Academy Award. She splits her time between the U.S. and Ireland developing feature film projects and directing commercials. Green's commercial work, particularly for charity organizations, has been showcased at the Cannes Lions and YoungGuns festivals.

Ailbhe Keogan is the author of the novel *Molly and the Cyclops*, published by Hag's Head Press in 2006. *Run and Jump* is her first feature film script, developed with the support of the Irish Film Board. The script was selected as one of twelve to take part in the Berlin Talent Campus Script Station at the 2010 Berlin Film Festival. Keogan has traveled extensively in Southeast Asia, East Timor, Lesotho, and most recently the Saharawi refugee camps in the Algerian desert. She now calls Kerry, Ireland home.

Wolf/Bogdan Mustata (writer/director), *Romania*: In this surreal tale, a young boy's dearest wish is realized when his absent father is quite literally reborn and joins the family once again.

A graduate of the Romanian National Film School, **Bogdan Mustata** directed the short film *A Good Day For a Swim*, which won the Golden Bear for the best short film at the 2008 Berlinale. The film screened at dozens of festivals and won multiple awards at the 2008 Palm Springs International Short Film Festival. Mustata has lived in Vietnam and Dubai, where he wrote and directed for television. *Wolf* will mark his feature directorial debut.

Zero Motivation/Talya Lavie (writer/director), *Israel*: A sometimes comic, often dramatic look at the power struggles of three female clerks over one year in an administrative office at a remote army base in the Israeli desert.

A graduate of the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem, **Talya Lavie** writes and directs for various television dramas in Israel. Her short film, *Sliding Flora*, screened at MoMA, as well as in more than 40 film festivals worldwide, including the Berlinale. Her thesis film, *The Substitute*, received numerous international awards, including the Audience Award at the Berlinale and first prize at the Munich International Short Film Festival and the Melbourne International Film Festival.

Sundance Institute gratefully acknowledges Director's Guild of America, SAGIndie/Screen Actors Guild, and Writer's Guild of America, West; Sheila C. Johnson and Stephen Denkers Willard Eccles Foundation; and Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, The Annenberg Foundation, B.Co., Cinereach Ltd. , The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, George S. and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation, Hollywood Foreign Press Association, The James Irvine Foundation, and Time Warner Inc. for their generous support of the 2010 Feature Film Program.

Since 1981, the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program (FFP) has supported more than 450 independent filmmakers whose distinctive, singular work has engaged audiences worldwide. Program staff fully embrace the unique vision of each filmmaker, encouraging a rigorous creative process with a focus on original and deeply personal storytelling. Each year, up to 25 emerging filmmakers from the U.S. and around the world participate in a year-round continuum of support which can include the Screenwriters and Directors Labs, Film Composers Lab, Creative Producing Summit, ongoing creative and strategic advice, significant production and postproduction resources, a Rough-Cut Screening Initiative, a Screenplay Reading Series, and direct financial support through project-specific grants and artist fellowships. In many cases, the Institute has helped the Program's fellows attach producers and talent, secure financing, and assemble other significant resources to move their projects toward production and presentation. In addition, the FFP offers the Creative Producing Fellowship, a year-long Fellowship program for emerging independent producers, which includes a Creative Producing Lab, industry mentorship, and financial support.

Over its 29 year history, the **Sundance Institute Feature Film Program** has supported an extensive list of award-winning independent films including Eric Mendelsohn's *3 Backyards*, Shirin Neshat's *Women Without Men*, Cherien Dabis' *Amreeka*, Cary Fukunaga's *Sin Nombre*, Alex Rivera's *Sleep Dealer*, Fernando Eimbcke's *Lake Tahoe*, Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden's *Half Nelson*, Andrea Arnold's *Red Road*, Miranda July's *Me and You and Everyone We Know*, Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now*, Debra Granik's *Down to the Bone*, Ira Sachs' *Forty Shades of Blue*, Josh Marston's *Maria Full of Grace*, Peter Sollett's *Raising Victor Vargas*, John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream*, Kimberly Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry*, Tony Bui's *Three Seasons*, Walter Salles' *Central Station*, Chris Eyre and Sherman Alexie's *Smoke Signals*, Allison Anders' *Mi Vida*

Loca, Paul Thomas Anderson's *Hard Eight*, Tamara Jenkins' *Slums of Beverly Hills*, and Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*.

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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