

# SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

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## For Immediate Release

December 15, 2010

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## SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES TWELVE FEATURE FILM PROJECTS FOR JANUARY SCREENWRITERS LAB

***Selected Filmmakers tell Provocative and Surprising Stories with Specificity and Authenticity; Projects Cover Wide Range of Genres and Content, All with Contemporary Resonance***

Los Angeles, CA—Sundance Institute has selected twelve projects for the annual January Screenwriters Lab, to be held January 14-19, 2011 at the Sundance Resort in Utah. This year's group includes filmmakers from regions throughout the world, including the United States, Mexico, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. A hallmark of this year's Lab is its diversity, with filmmakers from a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds, an almost even split of men and women, and a wide spectrum of genres that includes comedy, period, horror-tinged thriller, and classic indie drama.

The Screenwriters Lab is a five-day writers' workshop that gives independent screenwriters the opportunity to work intensely on their feature film scripts with the support of established writers in an environment that encourages innovation and creative risk-taking. Through one-on-one story sessions, fellows engage in an artistically rigorous process that offers them indispensable lessons in craft, as well as the means to do the deep exploration needed to fully realize their material.

The projects selected for the **2011 January Screenwriters Lab** are:

- ***Adelaide*** / Liliana Greenfield-Sanders (writer/director), *U.S.A.*
- ***Adelyne*** / Holden Abigail Osborne (writer/director), *U.S.A.*
- ***confederacy*** / Jody Lee Lipes (co-writer/director) and Jeffrey Peixoto (co-writer), *U.S.A.*
- ***Eyes of a Thief*** / Najwa Najjar (writer/director), *Palestinian territories*
- ***Imperial Dreams*** / Malik Vitthal (co-writer/director) and Ismet Prcic (co-writer), *U.S.A.*
- ***In What City Does It Live?*** / Seng Tat Liew (writer/director), *Malaysia*
- ***La Raya*** / Yolanda Cruz (writer/director), *Mexico, U.S.A.*
- ***Little Accidents*** / Sara Colangelo (writer/director), *U.S.A.*
- ***On Evil*** / Carlo Mirabella-Davis (writer/director), *U.S.A.*
- ***Providence*** / Yaelle Kayam (writer/director), *Israel*
- ***Stem*** / Diane Bell (writer/director), *Scotland, U.S.A.*
- ***The Western Habit*** / Ian Olds (co-writer/director) and Paul Felten (co-writer), *U.S.A.*

"Our Feature Film Program's screenwriters labs are foundations of Sundance Institute and in many ways illustrate the scope of our year-round work around the world," said Executive Director Keri Putnam. "Many of the artists we have been privileged to work with have gone on to make brilliant films, and some of those films will make their world premieres at this year's Sundance Film Festival."

"I'm thrilled we are supporting such a diverse group of filmmakers who are bringing audiences into worlds they know intimately and exploring contemporary issues in unexpected and challenging ways," said Michelle Satter, Director of the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program. "These artists are pushing the envelope, delving into the personal and the political, and showcasing their robust individual voices and singular visions with work that is incredibly exciting in a wide spectrum of genres."

The fellows will work with a distinguished group of creative advisors, including Lab Artistic Director Scott Frank, Tony Drazan, Naomi Foner, Susannah Grant, John Lee Hancock, Kasi Lemmons, Fernando Leon de Aranoa, Malia

Scotch Marmo, Jessie Nelson, Scott Neustadter, Howard Rodman, Ira Sachs, Jennifer Salt, Susan Shilliday, Zach Sklar, Elena Soarez, and Tyger Williams.

Six films supported by the Feature Film Program will screen as part of the Dramatic Competition at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. They include *Circumstance*, written and directed by Maryam Keshavarz; *HERE*, co-written by Braden King and Dani Valent, and directed by Braden King; *Little Birds*, written and directed by Elgin James; *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, written and directed by Sean Durkin; *On the Ice*, written and directed by Andrew Okpeaha MacLean; and *Pariah*, written and directed by Dee Rees.

### 2011 January Screenwriters Lab Fellows and Projects:

**Liliana Greenfield-Sanders** (writer/director) / **Adelaide** (U.S.A.): Desperately seeking the attention of her parents, a teenage girl looking for love begins to induce medical emergencies, striking up an unusual relationship with the paramedic who repeatedly comes to her rescue in this indie comedy.

Born and raised in New York City, **Liliana Greenfield-Sanders** earned her BA with honors from Brown University and is a Masters Candidate at NYU's Tisch Graduate Film School. Her short film work includes *Ghosts of Grey Gardens* and *Anna*, and her most recent short film, *Adelaide*, won Best Short & Audience Awards at the Gen Art, Woodstock, Austin, Indie Memphis, and New Orleans Film Festivals, among others. Greenfield-Sanders has won a National Board of Review Student Grant Award and received both the Ang Lee and Women in Film & Television Scholarships at Tisch.

**Holden Abigail Osborne** (writer/director) / **Adelyne** (U.S.A.): A self-reliant country woman is drawn out of her cloistered world when family crisis rears its head.

A seventh generation child of rural Missouri, Holden Abigail Osborne combines innovative technique and personal narrative to create tactile worlds that live between reality and fiction. Her doc-narrative hybrid short film *Solitary/Release*, featuring James Franco and Holmes Osborne, premiered at the 2010 SXSW Film Festival. She is formerly a film and television editor, Head Producer for Wieden+Kennedy China, and founder of the non-profit LiveFree Films.

**Jody Lee Lipes** (co-writer/director) and **Jeffrey Peixoto** (co-writer) / **confederacy** (U.S.A.): In 1858, Brother Asa Candler signs the sacred covenant of the Shaker community at Pleasant Hill—deception, lust, violence, and all manner of sin will surely follow.

**Jody Lee Lipes** wrote and co-directed the scripted adaptation of Jerome Robbins' ballet *NY Export: Opus Jazz*. After winning an Audience Award at SXSW 2010, *Opus Jazz* had a limited theatrical release, aired on PBS and BBC, and earned a Rose d'Or nomination. Lipes' feature-length documentary, *Brock Enright: Good Times Will Never Be the Same*, screened at SXSW and Hot Docs 2009. In addition to lensing his own projects, Lipes' DP credits include the feature films *Martha Marcy May Marlene* (2011 Sundance Film Festival), *Tiny Furniture* (Winner SXSW 2010, 2011 Independent Spirit Award nominee for Best Cinematography), and *Afterschool* (2008 Cannes Film Festival).

**Jeffrey Peixoto** is a member of the rock group Donkey Skin. Since graduating from NYU's Film Department in 2006, Peixoto has written and directed several short films including *They Can Shoot Me But They Can't Kill Me and Neither Can You*, which screened at the Museum of Modern Art's Documentary Fortnight series in 2008.

**Najwa Najjar** (writer/director) / **Eyes of a Thief** (Palestinian territories): Returning to his hometown after being imprisoned for 7 years following the Palestinian uprising of 2002, a man searches for the son he never knew and discovers that peace does not necessarily equate with the absence of war.

**Najwa Najjar's** first feature film, *Pomegranates and Myrrh*, screened at multiple film festivals around the world and won ten international awards, receiving worldwide theatrical distribution. Her previous short films have screened at many international film festivals and include *Yasmine Tughani*, *Naim and Wadee'a*, and *They Came from the East*, which opened the European Academy Awards. Najjar recently produced a collection of short films by filmmakers around the world entitled *Gaza Winter*. She lives in Ramallah.

**Malik Vitthal** (co-writer/director) and **Ismet Prcic** (co-writer) / **Imperial Dreams** (U.S.A.): Two exceptional young black men from the Imperial Courts projects in Watts find out the hard way that just being American and capable of dreaming doesn't make them eligible for the American Dream.

**Malik Vitthal** was born in Los Angeles and was immersed in Eastern philosophy at an early age while traveling the world with his mother. Vitthal was selected to represent the United States three times as a Delegate at the World Youth Conference for Peace in India. An alumnus of the USC School of Cinematic Arts and a FIND Project: Involve fellow, he has made six short films that have screened at several international film festivals.

**Ismet Prcic** was born in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and immigrated to the United States at the age of nineteen. He holds a BA in Theatre from the University of California, San Diego and an MFA in Writing from the University of California, Irvine. His debut novel, (...*shards*...), is being published in 2011 by Grove Atlantic Inc. Prcic received a 2010 National Endowment for the Arts award in fiction. His work has appeared in McSweeney's Quarterly Concern, among other magazines.

**Seng Tat Liew** (writer/director) / *In What City Does It Live?* (Malaysia): The unexpected presence of an African immigrant hiding in a small Malaysian village arouses the superstitions of the local residents, calling into question whether home is defined by the place you live or by the people who surround you.

Regarded as one of the most promising filmmaking talents in Malaysia, **SengTat Liew** graduated from that country's Multimedia University, where he majored in 3D animation. His debut feature, *Flower in My Pocket*, swept multiple awards in numerous international film festivals including Pusan, Rotterdam, Fribourg, and Pesaro. In 2008, he was selected to participate at the Cannes Film Festival Cinefondation. He also produced Chui Mui's film *Year Without a Summer*.

**Yolanda Cruz** (writer/director) / *La Raya* (Mexico, U.S.A.): Destined to follow in the footsteps of the other men in his village, enterprising 11-year-old Papio has his heart set on emigrating north to the U.S.; after an abandoned refrigerator fortuitously appears, he tries to exploit its value to finance his journey, only to find that it may not ultimately be his destiny to leave.

**Yolanda Cruz** is a filmmaker from Oaxaca, Mexico. She has produced seven documentaries on Native people in the U.S. and Mexico. Her work has screened at film festivals and museums around the world including the Sundance Film Festival, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Park la Villette in Paris, and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, among others. Her work received the Audience and Best Feature Documentary Award from the National Geographic All Roads Film Project in 2005 and the Expresión en Corto International Film Festival in 2009. Cruz is a Sundance Institute Native Lab Fellow.

**Sara Colangelo** (writer/director) / *Little Accidents* (U.S.A.): A small American coal-mining town, rocked by the devastating effects of a mining accident, must now deal with the mysterious disappearance of a 13-year-old boy.

**Sara Colangelo** is a recent graduate of NYU's Graduate Film Division and received her BA in History from Brown University. Her short film work includes *Halal Vivero* (National Finalist, 2006 Student Academy Awards), *Un Attimo di Respiro (A Moment to Breathe)*, which screened at numerous film festivals including Tribeca and SXSW, and *Little Accidents*, which premiered at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival and went on to garner numerous awards. Colangelo is currently in post-production on a feature-length documentary, *Bill*, about the life of a man with Down Syndrome who is the lead singer of a Boston area punk band.

**Carlo Mirabella-Davis** (writer/director) / *On Evil* (U.S.A.): A rural family is plunged into chaos and violence by the return of their unstable daughter 21 years after her mysterious disappearance.

**Carlo Mirabella-Davis** was raised in the mountains of East Meredith, in upstate New York. He co-founded Elk Creek Cinema, a collective dedicated to films involving the upstate area. He has a BFA from Tisch NYU Undergraduate Film School and recently completed his Masters Degree at Tisch NYU Graduate Film School. Mirabella-Davis wrote and directed the short film *Knife Point*, which premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival, aired on ARTE-TV, and for which he won Best New Director at the Brooklyn International Film Festival.

**Yaelle Kayam** (writer/director) / *Providence* (Israel): In this ironic tale of the unsettling routine of a religious and illegal settlement in a lawless territory, 33-year-old Johanna comes from New Jersey to the West Bank, looking for love in all the wrong places.

Born in Tel Aviv, **Yaelle Kayam** received her BA in film at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, Australia, and upon her return to Israel was admitted to the Sam Spiegel Film School. Her thesis short film, *Diploma*, screened in numerous international film festivals, including at the Cinefondation at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival

(where it won third prize), and was distributed by Canal+. Kayam attended the 2010 Cinefondation Residence at Cannes and the 24/7 Artist in Berlin residence, a collaboration between the German Federal Film Fund, the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and the Israeli Film Fund.

**Diane Bell** (writer/director) / **Stem** (Scotland, U.S.A.): After her mother suffers a heart attack, a stem cell researcher returns to her birthplace on a journey that challenges her belief in the predetermination of life.

**Diane Bell** is originally from Scotland, but grew up in Japan, Australia, and Germany. Her first film as a writer/director, *Obselidia*, premiered in US Dramatic Competition at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Excellence in Cinematography Award and the Alfred P. Sloan Prize. It has gone on to win acclaim at festivals around the world, and was recently nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards, including one for Best First Screenplay. Bell currently resides in Santa Monica.

**Ian Olds** (co-writer/director) and **Paul Felten** (co-writer) / **The Western Habit** (U.S.A.): An Afghan journalist, exiled from his war-torn home to a small community in Northern California, struggles to find a new life for himself in the face of a low-paying job on the local police blotter, a meddling avant-garde theater director, and a sexually charged relationship with his roommate, who also happens to be the town sheriff.

**Ian Olds** is a director of both narrative and documentary work. His most recent documentary, *Fixer: The Taking of Ajmal Naqshbandi*, won top jury prizes at the Tribeca and Madrid Film Festivals, was acquired by HBO, and was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Investigative Journalism. Other credits include the Iraq war documentary *Occupation: Dreamland*, which was shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best Documentary and won a 2006 Independent Spirit Award. Olds' narrative short films have played numerous festivals including Sundance, Rotterdam, and Clermont-Ferrand. He received his MFA from Columbia University's Film Division.

**Paul Felten** co-wrote the short film *Bomb*, which screened at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival, with Ian Olds. His journalism has appeared in *The Brooklyn Rail* and in the anthology *Lost and Found: Stories From New York* (Thoams Beller, ed.). He received his MFA from Columbia University's Film Division and teaches film history and screenwriting at Ramapo College in New Jersey. He lives in Brooklyn.

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, 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 30 year history, the Feature Film Program has supported an extensive list of award-winning independent films including Tanya Hamilton's *Night Catches Us*, Mohamed Al Daradji's *Son of Babylon*, 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*.

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