

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL 12

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ALFRED P. SLOAN FEATURE FILM PRIZES AWARDED TO *ROBOT & FRANK* AND *VALLEY OF SAINTS* AT 2012 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Sundance Institute / Alfred P. Sloan Commissioning Grant and Lab Fellowship Also Announced

Park City, UT — Sundance Institute today announced the winner of the Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, as well as the recipients of the Alfred P. Sloan Commissioning Grant and Lab Fellowship, both presented through the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program.

These activities, as well as a panel at the Festival, are part of the Sundance Institute Science-in-Film Initiative, which is made possible by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The Initiative supports the development and exhibition of new independent film projects that explore science and technology themes or that depict scientists, engineers and mathematicians in engaging and innovative ways.

"We are delighted to partner with the Sundance Institute for our tenth year of integrating science and technology themes and characters with the most adventurous new filmmakers and screenwriters," said Doron Weber, Vice President, Programs at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. "We are particularly pleased that for the first time ever, both of this year's prize-winning features were developed with seed money from the foundation's national film program which nurtures projects from its six participating film schools and four screenwriting development partners. These two remarkable but completely different films attest to the enormous range of possibility for filmmakers who tackle science and technology subjects and for audiences eager to enter new worlds."

"Year after year, we are impressed with the innovative ways in which filmmakers explore themes and characters with a passion for math, science and technology," said Keri Putnam, Executive Director, Sundance Institute. "As the importance of these disciplines and teaching them continues to be discussed on a national level, these artists are using film to contribute to that dialogue."

Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prizes

Robot & Frank, directed by Jake Schreier and written by Christopher Ford, and *Valley of Saints*, directed and written by Musa Syeed, have each been awarded the 2012 Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize and will split the \$20,000 cash award by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Now in its tenth year, the Prize is selected by a jury of film and science professionals and presented to outstanding feature films focusing on science or technology as a theme, or depicting a scientist, engineer or mathematician as a major character.

In *Robot & Frank*, a curmudgeonly older dad's grown kids install a robot as his caretaker. The film stars Frank Langella, Susan Sarandon, James Marsden and Liv Tyler. The jury presented the award to the film for its "humane and prescient portrait of the relationship between an aging father and his non-human caregiver, and for raising profound questions about the role of technology in our collective future."

In *Valley of Saints*, Gulzar plans to run away from the war and poverty surrounding his village in Kashmir with his best friend, but a beautiful young woman researching the dying lake leads him to contemplate a different future. The film stars Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, Mohammed Afzal Sofi and Neelofar Hamid. The jury presented the award to the film for its “brave, poetic and visually arresting evocation of a beautiful but troubled region, and for its moving, nuanced and accurate depiction of the relationship between a local boatman and a young woman scientist whose research challenges the status quo and offers hope for a restored eco-system.”

Previous Alfred P. Sloan Prize Winners include: Mike Cahill and Brit Marling, *Another Earth* (2011); Diane Bell, *Obselidia* (2010); Max Mayer, *Adam* (2009); Alex Rivera, *Sleep Dealer* (2008); Shi-Zheng Chen, *Dark Matter* (2007); Andrucha Waddington, *The House of Sand* (2006); Werner Herzog, *Grizzly Man* (2005), Shane Carruth, *Primer* (2004) and Marc Decena, *Dopamine* (2003). Several past winners have also been awarded Jury Awards at the Festival, including the Grand Jury Prize for *Primer*, the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award for *Sleep Dealer* and the Excellence in Cinematography Award for *Obselidia*.

As previously announced, this year’s Alfred P. Sloan jury members are:

Tracy Day

Tracy Day co-founded the World Science Festival in 2008 with world-renowned physicist and best-selling author Brian Greene. She serves as CEO and oversees the creative and programmatic offerings of the World Science Festival. She is a four-time National News Emmy® award-winning journalist and has produced live and documentary programming for the nation’s preeminent television news divisions for over two decades. At ABC News she was producer for This Week with David Brinkley, editorial and field producer for Nightline and story editor for the news magazine, Day One. Tracy has produced documentaries, specials and live town meeting broadcasts for PBS, The Discovery Channel, CNN, Lifetime and CNBC. In addition to Emmy® Awards, she won a Hugo Award, a 2004 Clarion Award and the CINE Golden Eagle for investigative journalism. She has been an adjunct professor in the Leadership and the Arts program at the Sanford Institute for Public Policy.

Helen Fisher

Helen Fisher, PhD, is a biological Anthropologist at Rutgers University. She studies the evolution, brain systems (fMRI) and cross-cultural patterns of romantic love, mate choice, marriage, adultery, divorce, gender differences in the brain, personality, temperament, and business personalities. She has written five internationally best selling books, including *WHY HIM? WHY HER?*; *WHY WE LOVE*; and *ANATOMY OF LOVE*. She lectures worldwide. Among her speeches are those at the World Economic Forum at Davos, TED, United Nations, Smithsonian, Salk Institute, Harvard Medical School and Aspen Institute. She publishes widely in academic and lay journals. For her work in the media, Helen received the American Anthropological Association’s Distinguished Service Award.

Dr. Robert J. Full

Dr. Robert J. Full is a Chancellor’s and Goldman Professor of Integrative Biology and Director of the Poly-PEDAL Laboratory at the University of California Berkeley, where he has led a focused international effort to demonstrate the value of integrative biology and biological inspiration by the formation of interdisciplinary collaborations. Professor Full serves on the advisory boards of Harvard’s Bio-inspired Design Wyss Institute, Research Corporation for Science Advancement and the Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities. Professor Full is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and received an NSF Presidential Young Investigator Award. Professor Full has authored over 200 contributions and has delivered over 300 national and international presentations. He has presented his research at TED, Industrial Light and Magic, Blizzard Entertainment, Tippett Studios, Google, Yahoo Tech Pulse, and ACM SIGGRAPH. Professor Full has been featured in television shows on PBS, BBC, Discovery Channel, the History Channel, Animal Planet and National Geographic.

Gwyn Lurie

Writer and producer Gwyn Lurie adapted the Oliver Sacks story *The Last Hippie* into the film *The Music Never Stopped*, which starred J.K. Simmons and Julia Ormond and premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film

Festival as the Salt Lake City Gala Film. Gwyn also produced the award-winning documentary *Voices From the Attic* about her mother's years in hiding during the holocaust. Before venturing onto the creative side of the film business, she worked as an executive at both 20th Century Fox and Interscope. Gwyn has written for Reese Witherspoon and Jennifer Aniston among others. She is currently adapting the Swedish film *Simple Simon* for Fox 2000 and also serving a four year term as a member on the Montecito Union School Board, to which she was elected in 2010.

Alex Rivera

Alex Rivera is a filmmaker and media artist. His work tells Latino stories through a highly stylized cinematic language and has been screened at the Museum of Modern Art, The Berlin International Film Festival, New Directors/New Films, The Guggenheim Museum, PBS, Telluride and other international venues. His first feature film, *Sleep Dealer*, premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival where it won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award and Alfred P. Sloan Prize. Rivera is a Sundance Institute Fellow, USA Artist Fellow, Creative Capital Grantee and a Rockefeller Fellow.

Sundance Institute / Alfred P. Sloan Commissioning Grant

Flood (Writer/director: Katy Scoggin) — A daughter journeys to bring her creationist dad down to earth.

Katy Scoggin looks for humor in life's most mundane and humiliating corners. Though a New Yorker, she was raised by evangelicals in a smoggy valley east of LA. She studied sculpture and German on scholarship at Washington University in St. Louis and filmmaking as a Fulbright scholar in Berlin. While in film school at NYU, she held a graduate assistantship in cinematography. Later, she was an associate producer on Laura Poitras's award-winning documentary *The Oath* (2010). She still works as a producer and cinematographer at Praxis Films.

Sundance Institute / Alfred P. Sloan Lab Fellowship

Operator (Co-writer/director: Logan Kibens; Co-writer: Sharon Greene) — In this existential comedy, when a programmer is hired to create the ideal personality for an automated call center, his attempts to quantify what it means to be human throws his life into chaos.

Logan Kibens has written and directed over 50 short films. She was awarded the 2011 HBO/DGA Directing Fellowship and was selected as one of Film Independent's 2011 Project:Involve fellows after completing her CalArts thesis film, *Recessive*. The short has screened nationally and internationally at film festivals including Outfest, Frameline, Reeling and Zinegoak, among others. Kibens worked as a commercial editor for eight years, and is an award-winning projections designer for theatre and dance.

Sharon Greene is a Chicago playwright turned screenwriter. Her play, *Fake Lake*, was on the Best Plays of 2008 list of both *Time Out Chicago* and the *Chicago Tribune*, and was supported by a grant from the NEA. A recent graduate of USC's Writing for Screen and Television program, her original television pilot, "Cherryland," was nominated for the Student Humanitas Prize for Drama.

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Founded in 1934, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation is a non-profit philanthropy that makes grants in science, technology and economic performance. This Sloan-Sundance partnership forms part of a broader national program by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to stimulate leading artists in film, television, and theater; to create more realistic and compelling stories about science and technology; and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists, engineers, and mathematicians in the popular imagination. Over the past decade, the Foundation has partnered with some of the top film schools in the country – including AFI, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, NYU, UCLA, and USC – and established annual awards in screenwriting and film production and an annual first-feature award for alumni. The Foundation has also started an annual Sloan Feature Film Prize at the Hamptons International Film Festival and

initiated new screenwriting and film production workshops at the Hamptons and Tribeca Film Festival and with Film Independent. As more finished films emerge from this developmental pipeline—four features were completed this year, with half a dozen more on deck—the foundation has also partnered with the Coolidge Corner Theater and the Arthouse Convergence to screen science films in up to 40 theaters nationwide. The Foundation also has an active theater program and commissions over a dozen science plays each year from the Ensemble Studio Theater, Manhattan Theatre Club and Playwright Horizons.

The Sundance Film Festival

A program of the non-profit Sundance Institute, the Festival has introduced global audiences to some of the most ground-breaking films of the past two decades, including *sex, lies, and videotape*, *Maria Full of Grace*, *The Cove*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Precious*, *Trouble the Water*, and *Napoleon Dynamite*, and through its New Frontier initiative, has showcased the cinematic works of media artists including Isaac Julien, Doug Aitken, Pierre Huyghe, Jennifer Steinkamp, and Matthew Barney. The 2012 Sundance Film Festival sponsors include: Presenting Sponsors – *Entertainment Weekly*, HP, Acura, Sundance Channel and Chase SapphireSM; Leadership Sponsors – Adobe Systems Incorporated, BingTM, Canon, DIRECTV, Focus Forward, a partnership between GE and CINELAN, Southwest Airlines, Sprint and Yahoo!; Sustaining Sponsors – Bertolli® Frozen Meal Soups, FilterForGood®, a partnership between Brita® and Nalgene®, Grey Goose® Vodka, Hilton HHonors and Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, L'Oréal Paris, Stella Artois®, Timberland, Time Warner Inc. and YouTubeTM. Sundance Institute recognizes critical support from the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development, and the State of Utah as Festival Host State. The support of these organizations will defray costs associated with the 10-day Festival and the nonprofit Sundance Institute's year-round programs for independent film and theatre artists. www.sundance.org/festival

Sundance Institute

Sundance Institute is a global nonprofit organization founded by Robert Redford in 1981. Through its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, composers and playwrights, the Institute seeks to discover and support independent film and theatre artists from the United States and around the world, and to introduce audiences to their new work. The Institute promotes independent storytelling to inform, inspire, and unite diverse populations around the globe. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Born into Brothels*, *Trouble the Water*, *Son of Babylon*, *Amreeka*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Spring Awakening*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Light in the Piazza* and *Angels in America*. Join [Sundance Institute](http://www.sundance.org) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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