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Sundance Institute and Time Warner Foundation Select Ten Fellows for 2015 Artist Support Grants

56 Independent Artists Supported since 2007 through Collaboration

Grants Awarded to Foster the Talent of Diverse Artists in Film, Theatre and New Media

Los Angeles, CA — Sundance Institute and Time Warner Foundation announced today the ten artists selected for the 2015 Sundance Institute | Time Warner Foundation Fellowship Program, which recognizes and fosters the talent of diverse independent artists. These Fellowships and accompanying grants are part of the Institute's year-round artist programs, including 24 residency labs and more than \$2.5 million in grants for independent artists each year.

The program this year expanded to include support for Fellows working in new media, as well as continued support for Fellows in documentary and narrative film, theatre and film music as well as from the Institute's Native American and Indigenous Program. Fellows attend an annual Lab and receive continued support from the Institute, including mentoring, strategic granting, attendance at the Sundance Film Festival and participation in screenplay readings, work-in-progress screenings and related programs and events. Since 2007, Time Warner Foundation has supported more than 54 artists through Sundance Institute, including Ryan Coogler (*Fruitvale Station*), Aurora Guerrero (*Mosquita y Mari*), Branden Jacobs-Jenkins (*Appropriate*) and Sydney Freeland (*Drunktown's Finest*).

Keri Putnam, Executive Director of Sundance Institute, said, "Time Warner Foundation's longstanding support for independent artists has nurtured a diverse and profound body of work. We are grateful to the Time Warner Foundation for their shared encouragement of championing unique voices."

"The mission of the Time Warner Foundation is to seek innovative and powerful ways to discover, nurture and celebrate the next generation of storytellers. To that end, the Foundation has developed the New Works/New Voices initiative to foster the creation, development and production of work that reflects the voices and experiences of artists from all backgrounds. Time Warner has been, and continues to be, a tremendous advocate of Sundance Institute's work around the world as a partner aligned with our mission," said **Lisa Garcia-Quiroz**, Senior Vice President of Cultural Investments at Time Warner. "It is a special thrill to see past Time Warner Fellows screen their incredible films, and we're looking forward to these new Time Warner Fellows engaging audiences in the larger discussion of how storytelling unites our global community."

The 2015 Sundance Institute | Time Warner Foundation Fellows are:



Cecilia Aldarondo (Documentary Film Program) – Cecilia Aldarondo is a New York-based filmmaker of Puerto Rican origin. She obtained her MA in Contemporary Art Theory from Goldsmiths College and PhD in Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society from the University of Minnesota. Her feature documentary *Memories of a Penitent Heart* is one of 10 projects selected for IFP's 2015 Documentary Completion Labs. The film has been supported by grants and fellowships The MacDowell Colony, The Sundance Institute, The Time Warner Foundation, and The National Association of Latino Independent Producers. She is a Firelight Media Producer's Lab Fellow, and joins the faculty of Skidmore College in Fall 2015 as Assistant Professor of Film.

Kathryn Bostic (Film Music Program) – Kathryn Bostic has composed music for film, TV and theater. Her credits include the award-winning films *Dear White People* and *Middle of Nowhere*. She collaborated with the iconic playwright August Wilson on Broadway and wrote the original score for the PBS American Masters documentary *August Wilson-The Ground on Which I Stand*. Through the Sundance Institute | Time Warner Foundation Fellowship Bostic will continue creation of *The August Wilson Symphony*, based on her music from the PBS American Masters documentary and her work with Wilson.

Christopher Nataanii Cegielski (Native American and Indigenous Program, Time Warner Foundation Native Producer Fellow) - Christopher Nataanii Cegielski is a Navajo filmmaker from Flagstaff, Arizona. As a recent graduate from The University of Arizona's B.F.A. film program, he has worked on narrative shorts, documentaries, music videos and feature films. His new short film, *Bloodlines* (2014), was a project completed for his senior thesis at The University of Arizona. *Bloodlines* has been an official selection at festivals such as the Berlinale International Film Festival, Sun Valley Film Festival, Cine Las Americas International Film Festival and the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. His new short film, *Movement Through the Valley* (2015) is set to shoot in October of 2015.

Christopher Chen (Theatre Program) – Christopher Chen is a San Francisco based playwright whose produced works include *The Hundred Flowers Project*, *Mutt*, *The Late Wedding*, *Caught* and *Aulis: An Act of Nihilism in One Long Act*. He has been produced and developed at the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Beijing Fringe, Berkeley Rep Ground Floor, Crowded Fire, Impact Theatre, InterAct Theatre, The Lark, Silk Road Rising, Sundance Institute Theatre Lab and U.C. Berkeley/Zellerbach Playhouse. His honors include: the Glickman Award, Rella Lossy Award, shortlist for the James Tait Black Award, PONY finalist and the 2013 Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, through which he was playwright-in-residence at The Vineyard Theatre.

Nia DaCosta (Feature Film Program) – Nia DaCosta is a writer/director based in New York City. She has written and directed projects for stage, film and new media platforms including the playlet *Kingdom Come* at the Leicester Square Theatre in London, the game show *Sagmeister v Walsh* for Adobe (Behance), and the documentary *Shark Loves the Amazon*. The Sundance Institute | Time Warner Fellowship included support for DaCosta to continue to research and develop her project *Little Woods* which she recently workshoped at the Sundance Institute Directors Lab.

Yung Jake (New Frontier) – Yung Jake is net-centric artist, director, rapper, and Internet persona. His filmography includes interactive videos *e.m-bed.de/d* and *Augmented Real*, which were featured at Sundance Film Festival, as well as conceptual rap videos *She Don't Need to Know* and *Look*. He has been featured in various art exhibitions worldwide; most recently in solo show *Twisted Metal III* in East Hampton, NY. Jake made recent waves online for celebrity portraiture created purely out of emojis. Such creations have been covered by the likes of Time Magazine, among others. The Sundance Institute | Time Warner Foundation Fellowship included support for Yung Jake to develop new conceptual rap video projects.



Ciara Lacy (Native American and Indigenous Program) – Ciara Lacy is a documentary filmmaker with an interest in crafting films that use both strong characters and investigative journalism to challenge the creative and political status quo. Ciara is a current Sundance Institute | Time Warner Foundation Fellow as well as Firelight Media Producers' Lab Fellow, and has benefited from fellowships with the Sundance Institute's Native Lab, the Princess Grace Foundation, and the Independent Filmmaker Project (IFP). Her latest documentary *OUT OF STATE* is the proud recipient of support from the Next Step Media Fund, ITVS, MacArthur Foundation, Tribeca All Access, Pacific Islanders in Communication, and the Hawaii People's Fund.

Christopher Makoto Yogi (Feature Film Program) – Christopher Makoto Yogi was born in Honolulu, Hawai'i and raised on the ocean. With a background in creative writing and poetry, he crafts personal fiction and non-fiction tales inspired by the mystical details of his home. Yogi's most recent film, *Makoto: or, Honesty* is a short documentary on the death of his father. His work has been broadcast on PBS, MTV, Bravo, and has garnered honors from the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. He is a graduate of the USC School of Cinematic Arts. The Sundance Institute | Time Warner Fellowship included support for Yogi to continue to research and develop his project *I Was a Simple Man* which he recently workshopped at the Sundance Institute Directors Lab.

Blake Pickens (Native American and Indigenous Program, Time Warner Foundation Native Producer Fellow) - Blake Pickens is a Chickasaw filmmaker from the south side of Oklahoma City, from a neighborhood known as the Flats. Despite the community's rampant drug use and gang wars, Blake found his way into storytelling with a writing position at National Lampoon. He later attended the Peter Stark Producing Program at USC where he and his producing partner, Stephen Love Jr., formed their company BS Pictures. They are currently in production on the Steven Caple Jr.'s film *The Land* and in development on *Bexar County* with writer-director Catherine Grieve and co-writer Dylan Slocum. Blake's aspirations are to tell the stories that make people laugh, cry, and ultimately impact their lives.

Alex Rivera (New Frontier) - Alex Rivera is a filmmaker who has been telling new, urgent, and visually adventurous Latino stories for more than 15 years. His first feature film, *Sleep Dealer*, won multiple awards at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival and the Berlin International Film Festival and landed him on Variety's '10 Directors to Watch' list. Rivera is a Rockefeller Fellow, USA Artist Fellow, Creative Capital grantee and was The Rothschild Lecturer at Harvard University. In 2015 Rivera was awarded major support from the Surdna Foundation for his film-in-progress, *The Infiltrators*. He received an Art & Technology Lab Grant from LACMA for an upcoming project in virtual reality. His recent collaborations have included work with Manu Chao, La Santa Cecilia and Aloe Blacc. Alex studied at Hampshire College and lives in Los Angeles.

Sundance Institute

Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides and preserves the space for artists in film, theatre, and new media to create and thrive. The Institute's signature Labs, granting, and mentorship programs, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences to artists in igniting new ideas, discovering original voices, and building a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Sin Nombre*, *The Invisible War*, *The Square*, *Dirty Wars*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *Fun Home*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).