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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 4, 2016

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Inaugural Sundance Institute | YouTube New Voices Lab Incubates Next Generation of Digital Creativity

18 Creators with their New Web Series Selected to Participate



Top, L-R: Brent Butler, Sujata Day, Gaby Dunn, Stian Hafstad, Keith Hollihan, Daniel K. Isaac, Lars Kenseth, Anna Kerrigan, Trey Moe.
Bottom, L-R: Benedict Moran, Xavier Neal-Burgin, Allison Raskin, Marie-Marguerite Sabongui, Rory Uphold, Baron Vaughn, Rosemary Williams, Thomas Wright, Cathy Y. Yan.

Los Angeles, CA — Sundance Institute has selected 18 creators of short form digital series for its inaugural **Sundance Institute | YouTube New Voices Lab**, November 10-12 at YouTube Space Los Angeles. Through hands-on workshops and story meetings with showrunners and industry leaders, the New Voices Lab will cultivate a growing group of emerging creatives who are shaping the form and content of episodic storytelling. The New Voices Lab is part of Sundance Institute and YouTube's ongoing commitment to supporting independent creators working in narrative forms. This effort follows the Sundance Institute's annual Episodic Story Lab that began in 2014 and the Sundance Institute | YouTube Creators Intensive launched in 2016.

Fellows will work with creators, showrunners and episodic producers to further the development of original short-form projects in a supportive environment that encourages risk-taking and innovation, led by Michelle Satter, Founding Director of the Sundance Institute Feature Film Program, and Jennifer Goynes Blake, Senior Manager of the Episodic Storytelling Initiative, with curriculum support from executives at YouTube. Over three days, Fellows will participate in an intensive writing workshop, directing the actor workshop, one-on-one creative story meetings, writers' rooms, and case study presentations. After the Lab, Fellows will have access to year-round, customized creative and strategic support through Sundance Institute's staff and network of mentors.

"As technology and platforms evolve, we continue to meet rising artists where they are," said **Michelle Satter**. "We support risk-takers and innovators, and the episodic format offers many opportunities for boundary-pushing. Connecting these storytellers with our seasoned advisors at the New Voices Lab will support the emerging careers of an exciting new group of creators in the episodic space."

"Supporting the growth and development of emerging creators is key to us at YouTube," said **Danielle Tiedt**, Chief Marketing Officer, YouTube. "We want to do everything we can to nurture independent storytellers, inspire them to take risks and empower them to take their videos to new heights."

Creative Advisors include Rich Appel (executive producer/showrunner, *Family Guy*), Mara Brock Akil (creator/showrunner, *Girlfriends*), Jen Celotta (writer/director, *The Office*), Joan Darling (writer/director/actor), Stephen Falk (creator/executive producer/showrunner, *You're the Worst*), Gina Fattore (co-executive producer, *Californication*), Russel Friend (executive producer, *House M.D.*), Emily Halpern (co-executive producer, *Blackish*), David Iserson (producer, *Mad Men*), Laura McCreary (co-executive producer, *Fresh Off the Boat*), Zahir McGhee (co-executive producer, *Scandal*), Dara Resnik (co-executive producer, *I Love Dick*), Danielle Sanchez-Witzel (showrunner/executive producer, *The Carmichael Show*), Christy Stratton (consulting producer, *Modern Family*), Bernie Su (showrunner/executive producer, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*), Joan Tewkesbury (writer, *Nashville*) and Bill Wheeler (writer, *Queen of Katwe*).

The Sundance Institute Feature Film Program is supported by The Annenberg Foundation; Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; YouTube; RT Features; Time Warner Foundation; Amazon Studios; NBCUniversal; Hollywood Foreign Press Association; National Endowment for the Arts; NHK Enterprises, Inc.; Manish Mundra; Firestone / von Winterfeldt Family Fund; Technicolor; the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; SAGindie; The Ray and Dagmar Dolby Family Fund; Grazka Taylor; A3 Foundation; and The Ammon Foundation.

A full list of Sundance Institute | YouTube New Voices Lab Fellows and their projects follows.

According to My Mother

By Daniel K. Isaac & Cathy Y. Yan

Daniel's life as a young, gay, Korean-American, struggling actor in New York was complicated enough — and that was before his disapproving and devout Christian mother moved in.

Daniel K. Isaac is a Korean-American actor and writer born and raised in Southern California and currently based in New York City. You can see him on the small screen as Ben Kim on Showtime's *Billions* and read too much about his personal life on an even smaller screen if you google *According to My Mother*.

Cathy Y. Yan is a filmmaker based in New York City. She was born in China and raised between Hong Kong and Washington D.C. She received her MFA from NYU's Tisch Graduate Film Program, an MBA from NYU's Stern School of Business and a BA from Princeton University. In March 2017, Cathy will be directing her feature *Dead Pigs* in Shanghai; Alibaba Pictures and Media Asia are producing, and China's renowned director Jia Zhangke (*A Touch of Sin*, *Mountains May Depart*) is attached as executive producer.

Caught in the Web

By Stian Hafstad

Set inside the Internet, *Caught in the Web* is a behind-the-screens comedy that explores the inner workings of the world wide web through the eyes of Finn, a second-rate search engine worker trying to make a name for himself in the shadow of tech powerhouse, Doodle.

Stian Hafstad is a Norwegian filmmaker living in New York. He is the co-creator of the viral hit machine *PistolShrimps* on YouTube (with over 150 million views), and his Columbia MFA thesis short *Getting In* was a

semifinalist at the 2015 Student Academy Awards. His new digital series *Saving the Human Race* premieres on CW Seed in early 2017.

Corpodyne

By Lars Kenseth & Brent Butler

Told through a series of hilariously incompetent corporate training videos, *Corpodyne* explores the byzantine bureaucracy and mysterious collapse of a 1990s mega-corporation.

Lars Kenseth is a comedy maniac, writer, producer, and animator. He was one of the first writers admitted to the Fox animation program, where he created *Lifers*. After that, Lars migrated to MTV where he was in the writers' room for the animated comedy series *Popzilla* (8 episodes) as well as Canada Global TV's *Bob & Doug* (22 episodes).

Brent Butler is a Los Angeles-based comedy producer, writer and director. He spent four years at *Jimmy Kimmel Live* before joining the comedy collective JASH. There he helped create a number of hit series including *Norm Macdonald Live*, *Getting Doug with High*, and the Streamy-nominated *Reggie Watts in VR*. He also wrote for the MTV animated sketch show *Popzilla* and hosts the popular podcast *Megaboom!! Radio* with *Corpodyne* partner Lars Kenseth.

Lame Lance

By Xavier Neal-Burgin, Trey Moe & Thomas Wright

Lame Lance is a coming of age comedy about four best friends trying to navigate adulthood, relationships and raging hormones against the backdrop of their historically black college.

Xavier Neal-Burgin is a writer/director from USC's School of Cinematic Arts. He's an alumnus of the ABFF HBO Short Film Competition and was a semi-finalist for The Student Academy Awards. A goofball at heart, he's amassed 50,000 followers via long form Twitter stories dealing with Gucci flip flops, big donks and twerking. He strives to bring an emotionally powerful aesthetic through drama, and a pleasantly gut-aching hilarity through comedy.

Trey Moe is an American comedian, actor, YouTuber and writer based in Los Angeles where he is currently working the standup circuit. So far Trey Moe has amassed a following of 400,000+ people across his social networks.

Thomas Wright was born in San Diego and currently resides in Los Angeles. He has been a part of the entertainment industry for more than a decade and has appeared in major films such as *Fruitvale Station* and *Red Tails*.

Lezzies

By Gaby Dunn

Alli and Harper are just another Subaru-driving lesbian couple looking for happiness in Silver Lake. But when Alli's brother moves back to town, there's trouble in hipster paradise — mainly because he's also Harper's ex.

Gaby Dunn is a writer, journalist, YouTuber, actress and comedian living in Los Angeles. She is the co-creator of the popular YouTube comedy channel *Just Between Us*, one of Entertainment Weekly's five channels to watch in 2016, which has amassed over 80 million views. She is also the host of Panoply's *Bad With Money with Gaby Dunn* which in less than seven days became one of the top 10 podcasts on iTunes. Most recently Gaby co-created and starred in a pilot for MTV and developed an original half-hour pilot with FX.

MXC: The Invention of Tomorrow**By Rosemary Williams & Keith Hollihan**

In the aftermath of a terrorist bombing, a young woman named Dani is detained and interrogated in a high-security prison. Forced to recall her unconventional upbringing in a cloistered scientific research facility, Dani starts to retrieve lost memories of a utopian community in which ideals became perverted by paranoia, authoritarianism and fear of the outside world.

Rosemary Williams is a visual artist and filmmaker whose videos, installations and performance pieces have been shown internationally. In 2015, she directed *After* a feminist science fiction short. A recipient of numerous grants and awards, including the Jerome Foundation Film & Video Grant, Rosemary is also Professor of Integrated Media in the Art Department at St. Cloud State University.

Keith Hollihan is a novelist whose works include *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, a 2010 Publishers Weekly Book of the Year, and *Flagged Victor*, a fictionalized memoir of his childhood friends who committed a series of bank robberies over a two year period.

Society High**By Allison Raskin**

When scholarship student Tammy Cohen arrives at a prestigious boarding school for her junior year in 1984, all she wants is to fit in. She quickly realizes that the only way to achieve this goal is to join an international coke ring run by her mastermind roommate. And buy cooler shoes.

Allison Raskin is a writer/actor from New York who is one half of the popular YouTube comedy channel *Just Between Us*, which has amassed over 80 million views. She has written and starred in videos for BuzzFeed and SourceFed and is currently a cast member on Fullscreen's sketch show *Party In the Back*. Most recently Allison co-created and starred in a pilot for MTV and developed an original half-hour pilot with FX.

Soda Shop**By Sujata Day**

An overachieving female stoner soda shop employee must save her store from violent robbers, menacing soda conglomerates and vengeful health inspectors who threaten her rise up the soda world's corporate ladder.

Sujata Day has established herself as an actress, creator/writer, producer and director. You may recognize her as CeCe from the award-winning web series *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl*. Recent TV/film credits include *Insecure*, *Life in Pieces* and *The Grinder*. Sujata makes her narrative directing debut with the upcoming short film *Cowboy and Indian*.

Swirl**By Rory Uphold & Baron Vaughn**

Swirl is a modern comedy about an interracial polyamorous couple trying to negotiate the terms of their endearment.

Rory Uphold is a multi-hyphenate actor-writer-director with over 13 million views on her original series, *Only in HeLLA* and *This Is Why We're Single*. She was the first director in Elite Daily's Artist in Residency program and Top 4 in

FunnyorDie's Make 'em LAFF competition at the Los Angeles Film Festival. She recently starred in *Bodied*, a racial satire from director Joseph Kahn, and is currently developing a show with Crackle.

Baron Vaughn is an actor/comedian currently featured on Netflix's *Grace and Frankie*. He'll also be the newest voice of Tom Servo in the upcoming season of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. As a comedian, he has appeared on *Conan*, *Showtime*, *Comedy Central*, and recently released his second comedy album *Blaxistential Crisis*.

The Mission

By Marie-Marguerite Sabongui & Benedict Moran

Jaz Rizkalla, Canadian and proud of it, just landed her dream job as a UN diplomat in New York. But before she can make a difference, she'll have to learn how to navigate the eccentric characters and impossible clusterfuck that make up international diplomacy.

Marie-Marguerite is an actor, writer and impact producer. She was an advisor to Small Island countries at the UN, and was Chief of Staff of Here Now, a startup that engages the public on climate change through storytelling. As an actor, she has starred in projects with Fox and ABC, including one where she played a sci-fi superhero. Her action figure was called "Lego's most heinous offense" in Business Insider.

Benedict Moran is an award-winning independent journalist and filmmaker specializing in human rights and humanitarian emergencies. He was the diplomatic producer at Al Jazeera English, an aid worker in Darfur, Sudan and a Peace Corps volunteer in rural Benin. He is an official artist of the 2016 New York Television Festival.

The Witnesses

By Anna Kerrigan

Two years out of high school with nothing on the horizon but debt and part-time jobs, Mimi and Grover come up with a scheme to pose as Jehovah's Witnesses to rob the rich and give to the poor: themselves.

Anna Kerrigan is a filmmaker based in Los Angeles. Her Gotham-nominated digital series *The Impossibilities* has been featured in The Huffington Post, The Daily Dot and Indiewire.

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](#).

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