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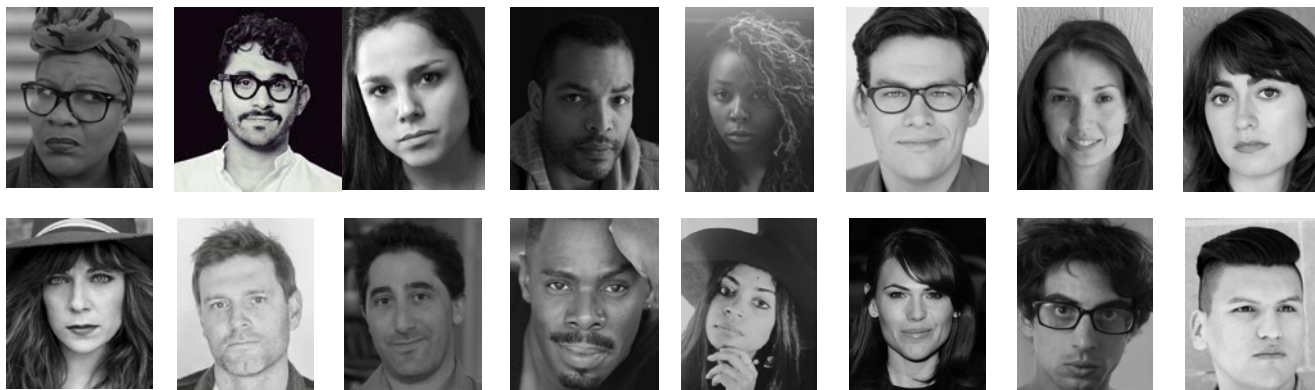
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## **Sundance Institute Gathers Emerging Global & U.S. Creators at 2017 Directors and Screenwriters Labs**

**Eight First-Time Feature Filmmakers Rehearse, Shoot and Edit Scenes  
 at Directors Lab in Utah Mountains;  
 Eight Writers Join for Screenwriters Lab**

**Advisors Include Robert Redford, Ed Harris, Octavia Spencer,  
 Luca Guadagnino, Karyn Kusama, Ira Sachs, Taylor Sheridan**



*Radha Blank, Aleem Khan, Francisca Alegria, Reinaldo Marcus Green, Tayarisha Poe, Brett Weiner, Emma Fletcher, Hannah Pearl Utt, Jen Tullock, Grainger David, Cory Miller, Colman Domingo, Amirah Tajdin, Clea DuVall, Marcos Díaz Sosa, Lyle Mitchell Corbine, Jr.*

**Los Angeles, CA** — Thirteen new independent feature projects from Cuba, Chile, Kenya, the UK and the U.S. have been selected for the 2017 Sundance Institute Directors and Screenwriters Labs in Utah's Wasatch Mountains. These Labs are the centerpiece of the nonprofit Institute's year-round support for independent artists.

At the Directors Lab (May 29-June 22), filmmakers will rehearse, shoot and edit key scenes from their scripts, working closely with Creative Advisors, actors and production crews in an immersive and practical process that drives creative growth. The one-on-one support of the Screenwriters Lab (June 24-29) focuses on the art and craft of screenplay writing, fostering an environment of support and dynamic inspiration. The Labs kick off a year-round continuum of support for the burgeoning storytellers, including strategic meetings and guidance from industry veterans, and are overseen by Feature Film Program Founding Director Michelle Satter and Labs Director Ilyse McKimmie.

"Our Lab brings together a community of artists from the U.S. and around the world to learn, discover and take risks in a pure workshop environment," said **Satter**. "These 13 artist-driven projects will advance through our

year-round support system, with the June Lab as a centerpiece of our program. Each artist brings a personal voice, unique worldview, and deep humanity to their work, creating an exchange of ideas and distinctive storytelling that resonates profoundly in today's world.”

Advisors for the month include: Robert Redford, Gyula Gazdag (Artistic Director, Directors Lab), Michael Almereyda, Scott Z. Burns, Joan Darling, Jonathan Dayton, Rick Famuyiwa, Valerie Faris, Robert Elswit, John Gatins, Stephen Goldblatt, Michael Goldenberg, Keith Gordon, Luca Guadagnino, Randa Haines, Ed Harris, Joe Hutshing, Clark Johnson, Karyn Kusama, Ken Kwapis, Kasi Lemmons, Malia Scotch Marmo, Pamela Martin, Rachel Morrison, Walter Mosley, Ira Sachs, Jennifer Salt, Susan Shilliday, Terilyn Shropshire, Taylor Sheridan, Elena Soarez, Octavia Spencer, Tim Squyres, Dana Stevens, Danny Strong, Joan Tewkesbury, Marietta von Hausswolff von Baumgartner, Lynette Wallworth, Doug Wright (Artistic Director, Screenwriters Lab), and Mauricio Zacharias.

Since 1981, the FFP has supported an extensive list of leading-edge independent filmmakers, including Damien Chazelle, Cary Fukunaga, Gina Prince Bythewood, Benh Zeitlin, Haifaa Al Mansour, Ryan Coogler, Dee Rees, Marielle Heller, Paul Thomas Anderson, Miranda July and Quentin Tarantino, among many others.

Five films supported by the Feature Film Program are among those screening at the 2017 Cannes International Film Festival: *A Ciambra*, written and directed by Jonas Carpignano, and *Patti Cake\$*, written and directed by Jeremy Jasper, both of which will screen in Directors Fortnight; and *Los Perros*, written and directed by Marcela Said, *Oh Lucy!*, written and directed by Atsuko Hirayanagi, and *Sicilian Ghost Story*, co-written and co-directed by Fabio Grassadonia & Antonio Piazza, which will all screen as part of the Critics' Week sidebar.

### **Directors Lab projects**

***The 40-Year-Old Version*** (U.S.A.) / **Radha Blank** (writer/director) — *The 40-Year Old Version* tells the story of a down-on-her-luck New York playwright who decides that the only way to salvage her artistic voice is to become a rapper...at age 40.

Radha Blank is a playwright, performer and writer for television and film. She participated in the 2013 Sundance Institute Playwrights Retreat at Ucross Foundation and is a 2011 Helen Merrill Award recipient, a 2011 NEA New Play Development Award recipient, a NYFA Fellow, a Nickelodeon Writing Fellow, and a member of The Public Theater's inaugural Emerging Writers Group. Blank has written for Baz Luhrmann's Netflix series, *The Get Down*, Lee Daniels' FOX's network series hit, *Empire*, and most recently served as Writer/Co-Producer for Spike Lee's new Netflix series, *She's Gotta Have It*. When not writing for the stage or screen, Blank performs as emcee RadhaMUSprime, whose brand of Ghost-Face-Killah-meets-Moms-Mabley Hip Hop Comedy has sold out shows from New York to Norway.

***After Love*** (U.K.) / **Aleem Khan** (writer/director) — When Mary is suddenly widowed after decades of marriage to her Pakistani husband, she discovers he has a secret family living just across the English Channel in Calais. As she sets out to meet her husband's mistress, Mary navigates her new reality and the Muslim faith she embraced for her husband many years ago.

Aleem Khan is a writer/director of mixed English-Pakistani heritage, based in London. He studied Film Direction at The University of Westminster before shooting his multi-award winning debut short film, *Diana*. Khan's third short film, *Three Brothers*, premiered at The BFI London Film Festival and received a BAFTA nomination for Best British Short Film in 2015. Recently named as one of Screen International's Stars of Tomorrow, Khan is the recipient of the John Brabourne Award and is a current participant on Guiding Lights, the U.K. film industry's leading high level development program.

***The Cow That Sang a Song About the Future*** (Chile) / **Francisca Alegria** (writer/director) — In rural Chile, a herd of cattle suddenly and mysteriously falls dead, a deceased woman inexplicably returns home, and an estranged family reunites with its oppressive patriarch to face up to their own complicated history together.

Francisca Alegria is a Chilean writer/director who received her MFA from Columbia University. Her short film *And the Whole Sky Fit in the Dead Cow's Eye*, a recipient of the National Board of Review Award, screened at the Telluride Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, New York Film Festival, San Francisco Film Festival, and Warsaw Film Festival, amongst others. It won Best International Fiction Short at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival and Best Latin American Short at the Miami Film Festival.

***Monsters and Men*** (U.S.A.) / **Reinaldo Marcus Green** (writer/director) — After capturing an illegal act of police violence on his cellphone, a Brooklyn street hustler sets off a series of events that inexorably alters the lives of a local police officer and a star high-school athlete.

New York native Reinaldo Marcus Green is a writer, director and producer. A recent graduate of NYU Tisch Graduate Film School, he was named one of *Filmmaker Magazine's* '25 New Faces of Independent Film' in 2015. His latest short film, *Stop*, premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. His previous short film, *Stone Cars*, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2014.

***Selah and the Spades*** (U.S.A.) / **Tayarisha Poe** (writer/director) — Once upon a time, a girl named Selah ruled Pontomic High School's most merciless gang: The Spades. Captivated by the pleasures and dangers of power, Selah is both charming and callous when deciding who to keep close and who to ruin.

Tayarisha Poe is a filmmaker and photographer from West Philadelphia. She was chosen as one of the '25 New Faces of Independent Film' by *Filmmaker Magazine* in 2015, received the Sundance Institute's Knight Foundation Fellowship in 2016, and was selected for the Tribeca All Access program in 2017. *Selah and the Spades: an Overture* (2014), the multi-media exploration into the dynamism of teenagehood in a fictional small town that her first feature film is based on, has been profiled by *Filmmaker Magazine* and *Indiewire*, and the feature film has gone on to receive development support from Cinereach, the Leeway Foundation, and Small But Mighty Arts, among others.

***Social Justice Warrior*** (U.S.A.) / **Brett Weiner** (co-writer/director) and **Emma Fletcher** (co-writer) — A privileged white college sophomore clashes with her history professor and throws her university into chaos when she attempts to turn the entire campus into a safe space free from offensive language.

Brett Weiner started writing and directing by making viral videos on the internet, including co-creating the *Honest Trailers* series, which has over a billion views. His *New York Times* digital series *Verbatim* was an official selection of the Sundance Film Festival Shorts Program twice, with *Verbatim: What is a Photocopier* in 2014 and *Verbatim: The Ferguson Case* in 2016. Weiner has worked as a producer/director for ABC Digital, directing the original sketch comedy show *Paper Dolls*, as well as *Declassified*, the digital companion to the ABC show *Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* He recently finished a documentary pilot for TruTV.

Emma Fletcher is a Los Angeles-based comedy writer. Her television credits include NBC's *Parks and Recreation* and Amazon's *Red Oaks*. Her uncredited work includes ghost-writing speeches and attempting to add humor to a book on neuroscience. Fletcher is currently developing a series about female gamers with Michael De Luca Productions for YouTube Red and Montecito Pictures is attached to produce her original pilot, *Feelings*. *Social Justice Warrior* will be her first feature.

***Stupid Happy*** (U.S.A.) / **Hannah Pearl Utt** (co-writer/director) and **Jen Tullock** (co-writer) — New York City, 1993: Dysfunctional, codependent sisters Rachel and Jackie believe they are orphans after the death of their father, only to find out the mother they thought died when they were young is not just alive, but the star of their favorite soap.

Hannah Utt is a writer/director/actor best known for the digital series *Disengaged*, which she directed for Super Deluxe as co-creator, writer and star, alongside collaborator Jen Tullock. She and Tullock co-wrote, produced, and starred in the short film *Partners*, which premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. *Stupid Happy*, which will also star Utt and Tullock, was supported through the Sundance Creative Producers Lab and Fellowship. Utt's directorial debut was the short film *Sisters*, which premiered at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival in 2014.

Jen Tullock is an actor and writer, best known for the Turner/Super Deluxe series *Disengaged*, which she wrote and starred in alongside collaborator Hannah Pearl Utt, as well as their short film *Partners*, which premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. She is the award-winning audiobook narrator of several *New York Times* bestsellers and voiced the title character in the Emmy Award-winning short *Henry*. She was featured in the 2013 NBC Diversity Showcase and is the former co-host/writer of *The Morning After* on Heritage Radio.

***The Wall at the End of the Road*** (U.S.A.) / **Grainger David** (writer/director) — At the height of the Superbug Era in near-future South Carolina, a young disinfectant technician must put his dreams on hold after a mysterious outbreak coincides with the return of his estranged father. When the situation escalates and his town is quarantined, he must negotiate the emotional and political fallout in a fight for his family's survival.

Grainger David's short film *The Chair* won the Jury Prize at SXSW and went on to screen in competition for the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. A South Carolina native and graduate of Princeton University and NYU Grad Film, David has received generous support for his work from the South Carolina Film Commission, the San Francisco Film Society, the Sloan Foundation, and the MacDowell Colony.

### **Screenwriters Lab projects**

***City on Fire*** (U.S.A.) / **Cory Miller** (writer) and **Colman Domingo** (director) — *City on Fire* tells the incendiary true story of an escalating conflict between the city of Philadelphia and the radical group MOVE, which led to an armed siege in a residential neighborhood and one of the most shocking decisions ever made by a city against its citizens.

Cory Miller is a writer/director living in Los Angeles. Miller spent four years in New York City investigating complaints against the NYPD for the New York City government, a job that exposed him to countless stories involving the best and worst of the police department and New York's citizens. His feature script *Line of Duty*, a modern retelling of Macbeth, was featured on the 2013 Black List. Miller graduated from Wesleyan University and the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television.

Colman Domingo's acting credits include *Lincoln*, directed by Steven Spielberg, *Selma*, directed by Ava DuVernay, and *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by Nate Parker, among others. He stars on television as 'Victor Strand' on AMC's *Fear the Walking Dead*. Domingo's recent work as a director includes staging *Barbecue* by Robert O'Hara for the Geffen Playhouse, and *Seven Guitars* for the Actors Theater. The Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League and Olivier Award-nominated theater artist is also a celebrated playwright.

**Hawa Hawaii** (Kenya) / **Amirah Tajdin** (writer/director) — Hamedi, a Muslim drag queen, returns home to be with his dying mother. Back in Mombasa for the first time in decades, yet still facing his mother's longstanding disapproval of his lifestyle, he decides that Taarab, the fading art of Swahili orchestral singing, may be the only way to mend their deeply fractured relationship.

Amirah Tajdin is a Kenyan artist and filmmaker who was born in Nairobi, spent her teenage years in Dubai, and graduated from Rhodes University in South Africa. Her short films include *Fluorescent Sin* and *His To Keep*. Her most recent short, *Marea de Tierra*, co-directed with Manuela Martelli, premiered at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival's Directors Fortnight as part of the Chile Factory Residency and screened at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival, among many other festivals worldwide.

**Layne** (U.S.A.) / **Clea DuVall** (writer/director) — Layne is stuck—in grief over her recently deceased mother, in a dead-end affair with her married boss, in compulsive behavior that only serves to isolate her. But when she meets Christine, a young car thief looking for a way to penetrate her own numbness, their galvanizing and dangerous connection changes them in ways they could not predict.

Clea DuVall recently garnered recognition for her feature writing/directing debut, *The Intervention*. The film premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and sold to Paramount Studios. Born and raised in Los Angeles, DuVall first became interested in acting while attending the Los Angeles High School of the Arts. Upon graduation, she quickly landed an agent and manager and has been working steadily as an actor ever since. Select acting credits include *Veep* (HBO), *The Newsroom* (HBO), *American Horror Story* (FX), *Heroes* (NBC), *Carnivale* (HBO), and *Argo*.

**Shock Labor** (Cuba) / **Marcos Díaz Sosa** (writer/director) — Cuba, 1988. Wilma struggles to maintain a small farm in the Cuban countryside while caring for her disabled husband, but her fortunes change when she is discovered to be a talented skeet shooter who can represent her country. As Wilma rises to stardom, a tornado sweeps her away to a vast luxury resort. Though she finds herself lauded by her country's ruling class, Wilma realizes that there is no place like home and knows she must find her way back to her farm.

Marcos Díaz Sosa is a Cuban film director and playwright. At the age of 17, he directed *Fractal*, a 60-minute documentary that won an award at the fifth Muestra Joven in Cuba. He recently completed the short film *Natural Phenomena*, which premiered in competition at the Guadalajara Film Festival. He has worked with the State Theatre of Jena, Germany, and co-directed the play *Bad Taste* at the Offene Welt Internationales Festival, Ludwigshafen, Germany, in 2015.

**Wild Indian** (U.S.A.) / **Lyle Mitchell Corbine, Jr.** (writer/director) — Two Anishinaabe men are inextricably bound together after covering up a senseless crime committed as adolescents. After years of separation following wildly divergent paths, they must finally confront how their traumatic secret has irrevocably shaped their lives.

Lyle Mitchell Corbine, Jr. is a filmmaker whose most recent short film, *Shinaab*, premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. He has been a recipient of several grants and fellowships from Sundance Institute, Time Warner Foundation, and the Minnesota State Arts Board.

The Sundance Institute Feature Film Program is supported by The Annenberg Foundation; Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; YouTube; RT Features; Will and Jada Smith Family Foundation; Time Warner Foundation; Amazon Studios; NBCUniversal; Hollywood Foreign Press Association; National Endowment for the Arts; NHK Enterprises, Inc.; Firestone / von Winterfeldt Family Fund; the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation;



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**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 *Boyhood*, *Swiss Army Man*, *Manchester By the Sea*, *Brooklyn*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Life, Animated*, *Sonita*, *20 Feet From Stardom*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Sin Nombre*, *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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