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## **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Presents Feature Film Prize to *Search* and Announces New Grants to Artists at 2018 Sundance Film Festival**

**Winners of Commissioning Grant, Episodic Storytelling Grant and Lab Fellowship Revealed**

### ***Search* Director-Screenwriter Aneesh Chaganty Honored**

**Park City, Utah** — At a reception at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival today, the beneficiaries of \$71,000 in grants from Sundance Institute and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation were revealed. **Doron Weber**, Sloan Vice President of Programs and Director of the Public Understanding of Science and Technology program, presented the Feature Film Prize to *Search* and announced the new winners: **Cherien Dabis's** *What The Eyes Don't See*, produced by **Rosalie Swedlin** and **Michael Sugar** (Sundance Institute | Sloan Commissioning Grant); **C. Wrenn Ball's** *Katie Wright* (Sundance Institute | Sloan Lab Fellowship) and **John Lopez's** *Untitled J.P. Morgan Project* (Sundance Institute | Sloan Episodic Storytelling Grant). **Aneesh Chaganty's** *Search* was formally presented with a \$20,000 check for winning the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Feature Film Prize, as previously announced.

The awards were presented at an evening cocktail reception at High West Distillery. These activities are part of the Sundance Institute Science-In-Film Initiative, which is made possible by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

"Telling these humanizing and nuanced stories about how science and technology influence every part of our lives is more important than ever. We are thrilled to honor and support these artists and their critical, timely, and deftly-crafted work," said **Keri Putnam**, Executive Director of Sundance Institute.

"We are delighted to partner with Sundance for our fifteenth year and to honor such innovative films as *Search* and such exciting new work as *Katie Wright*, *What the Eyes Don't See* and the *J.P. Morgan Project*, all of which dramatize scientific themes and characters in fresh and original ways," said **Doron Weber**, Vice President of Programs and Director of the program in Public Understanding of Science and Technology at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. "In a watershed year that saw such Sloan supported projects as *Hidden Figures* and *Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story* honored, we are especially gratified that these four works, in different ways, all depict female protagonists and other under-represented groups whose stories need to be told."

The fifteen-year partnership between the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and Sundance Institute forms part of the Sloan Foundation's Film Program under its broader effort in the Public Understanding of Science and Technology. The Film Program has demonstrated increasing success in bringing forward stories of pioneering women in science to the screen, including recent support for television writing and the Sloan-supported documentary *Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story*. The Sloan Film Program has also celebrated innovative means of storytelling that reveal the complex ways in which science and technology may affect and even transform both story and character, such as 2017's Feature Film Prize Winner, *Marjorie Prime*, and this year's winner, *Search*.

### **Search: Winner of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Feature Film Prize**

*Search* has been awarded the 2018 Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize and received a \$20,000 cash award from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation at today's reception. The Prize is selected by a jury of film and science professionals and presented to an outstanding feature film focusing on science or technology as a theme, or depicting a scientist, engineer or mathematician as a major character.

The [2018 Sloan Feature Film Prize Jury](#) was named on January 16, 2018 and includes Dr. Robert Benezra of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Weill Cornell Medicine of Cornell University; Dr. Heather Berlin, assistant professor of psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; actor and writer Kerry Bishé; and Nancy Buirski, director/producer/writer of *The Rape of Recy Taylor*.

The jury stated, "For its gripping and original interrogation of our evolving relationship with technology and how it mediates every other relationship in our lives, both positively and negatively, and for its rigorous formal experimentation with narrative, the 2018 Sloan Feature Film Prize at the Sundance Film Festival goes to Aneesh Chaganty's *Search*."

*Search* / U.S.A. (Director: Aneesh Chaganty, Screenwriters: Aneesh Chaganty, Sev Ohanian, Producers: Timur Bekmambetov, Sev Ohanian, Adam Sidman, Natalie Qasabian) — After his 16-year-old daughter goes missing, a desperate father breaks into her laptop to look for clues to find her. A thriller that unfolds entirely on computer screens. *Cast: John Cho, Debra Messing.*

**Aneesh Chaganty** is a 26-year-old writer/director whose two minute short film, a Google Glass spot called "Seeds", became an internet sensation after garnering more than 1 million YouTube views in 24 hours. Following its success, Aneesh was invited to join the Google Creative Lab in New York City, where he spent two years developing, writing and directing Google commercials. He is a recipient of the Future of Storytelling Fellowship, awarded to only five young creatives around the world "who have demonstrated a fearlessness to tell stories in unconventional ways" and whose works "will be instrumental in shaping the future of storytelling." *Search* is Aneesh's first feature.

**Sev Ohanian** is a 30-year-old screenwriter and producer native to Los Angeles. At the age of 20, he produced and self-distributed *My Big Fat Armenian Family*, a no-budget indie feature film that became popular with Armenian audiences around the world. Shortly after, he attended the USC School of Cinematic Arts MFA program — using the profits from his film to pay for tuition. Since graduating in 2012, he has been a producer on thirteen feature films, four of which have been Sundance Film Festival Official Selections. His first film, Ryan Coogler's *Fruitvale Station*, won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival. Andrew Bujalksi's *Results* premiered at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival and was acquired by Magnolia Pictures. Clea DuVall's *The Intervention* premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film

Festival and was acquired by Paramount. At the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, Ohanian was awarded the Sundance Institute / Amazon Studios Producers Award.

### **Sundance Institute / Sloan Commissioning Grant**

Cherien Dabis will receive a \$25,000 cash award from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation at this year's Sundance Film Festival for *What the Eyes Don't See*, produced by Rosalie Swedlin and Michael Sugar. Previous winners include Alex Rivera's *La Vida Robot* and Robert Edwards's *American Prometheus*.

***What the Eyes Don't See*** (U.S.A.) / **Cherien Dabis** (Writer/Director), **Rosalie Swedlin** (Producer) and **Michael Sugar** (Executive Producer) — A true story of how Iraqi American pediatrician and scientist Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha blew the whistle on local and state government officials for poisoning thousands of Flint, Michigan residents, especially children, by exposing them to disastrous levels of toxic lead in the water.

**Cherien Dabis** is an award winning filmmaker and television writer director who made her feature debut with *Amreeka*. The film world-premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival and won the coveted FIPRESCI at Cannes. It went on to win a dozen more international awards including the Humanitas Prize and was nominated for a Best Picture Gotham Award, and 3 Independent Spirit Awards. Dabis returned to Sundance with her second feature *May in the Summer*, which opened the 2013 Sundance Film Festival's U.S. Dramatic Competition section and had its international premiere at the Venice Film Festival. Dabis has also written and directed on such shows as Showtime's groundbreaking series *The L Word*, Fox's hit *Empire* and USA Network's Golden Globe nominated crime thriller *The Sinner*.

**Rosalie Swedlin** is a producer and literary manager at Anonymous Content. Swedlin began her career in New York book publishing, followed by six years handling publicity and marketing for various UK book publishers. Prior to joining Anonymous Content, she was a literary manager, producer, and partner at ICM for twelve years after having served as a senior vice president. Swedlin was an agent at CAA from 1981 – 1991 and was named co-head of the agency's motion picture department. Swedlin executive produced the upcoming TNT limited series *The Alienist* based on Caleb Carr's bestselling novel. *The Wife*, Swedlin's most recent feature film, debuted at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival. Her upcoming film projects include Jane Anderson's adaptation of *The Women in the Castle* and Haifaa Al Mansour's adaptation of the Cara Hoffman novel *Be Safe I Love You*.

**Michael Sugar** recently launched Sugar23 — a management and production company with a multi-year, first-look deal with Anonymous Content — where he was a partner for many years. He was awarded the Oscar® for Best Picture for *Spotlight* and most recently wrapped production on the Netflix series *Maniac*, with Cary Fukunaga. He is currently in production on *One Day She'll Darken* at TNT. He is an Executive Producer on the Netflix series *The OA* and the hit Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*. Sugar also Executive Produced Cinemax's critically acclaimed drama series *The Knick* directed by Steven Soderbergh. Sugar's impressive roster of literary and talent clients includes Steven Soderbergh, Richard Linklater, Cary Fukunaga, Edgar Wright, Marc Webb, Patty Jenkins, and Robin Wright. He has been nominated for multiple Emmys, and won a Peabody Award for *The Knick*.

### **Sundance Institute / Sloan Lab Fellowship**

C. Wrenn Ball will receive a \$15,000 cash award from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Previous winners include Logan Kibens's *Operator*, Michael Almereyda's *Experimenter* and *Marjorie Prime*, and Rob Meyer's *A Birder's Guide to Everything*.

**Katie Wright** (U.S.A.) / **C. Wrenn Ball** (Writer) — Just as the Wright Brothers are about to capitalize on the invention of their airplane, Orville is badly injured in a public crash, and sister Katie unexpectedly emerges to lead their business. Fighting resistance from businessmen, society, and even her own brothers, she strives to keep the family together and claim her place as part of their legacy. Based on the forgotten true story.

Hailing from North Carolina, **C. Wrenn Ball** exchanged life in the Southeast for work as an assistant on network television. He directed web series pilots in Los Angeles before completing an MFA at USC's John Wells Division of Writing for Screen and Television. Obsessed by the twang and rhythm of life, Ball is constantly merging his Southern sensibilities with feature and television writing.

### **Sundance Institute / Sloan Episodic Storytelling Grant**

John Lopez will receive an \$11,000 cash award from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation at this year's Sundance Film Festival.

**Untitled J.P. Morgan Project** (U.S.A.) / **John Lopez** (Writer, Creator) — A look at the family drama and professional innovations of American financier J.P. Morgan as the 20th century dawns and the country he helped build transforms radically.

A Los Angeles native, **John Lopez** has covered film and the arts for *Grantland*, *Vanity Fair* online and *Bloomberg Business Week*. His short *Plan B*, starring Randall Park and Rosa Salazar, was a finalist in the NBC Short Cuts Film festival; he also directed segments for NBC's 2014 *Actor's Showcase* and served as associate producer on Hossein Amini's film *The Two Faces of January*. In 2015, John was selected as a fellow for the 2015 Sundance Episodic Lab with his pilot *Crude*. Most recently, John has written for Netflix's upcoming crime drama *Seven Seconds* and CBS All Access's upcoming period drama *Strange Angel*, and he has just completed a mini-room for AMC's *Silent History*.

### **The Sundance Film Festival®**

The Sundance Film Festival has introduced global audiences to some of the most groundbreaking films of the past three decades, including *Boyhood*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Whiplash*, *Brooklyn*, *Twenty Feet from Stardom*, *Life Itself*, *The Cove*, *The End of the Tour*, *Blackfish*, *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*, *Dope*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *sex, lies, and videotape*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Precious* and *Napoleon Dynamite*. The Festival is a program of the non-profit Sundance Institute®. The Festival is a program of the non-profit Sundance Institute®. 2018 Festival sponsors include: Presenting Sponsors – Acura, SundanceTV, and Chase Sapphire®; Leadership Sponsors – Adobe, Amazon Studios, AT&T, DIRECTV, Dropbox, Omnicom, Stella Artois® and YouTube; Sustaining Sponsors – Canada Goose, Canon U.S.A., Inc., Dell, Francis Ford Coppola Winery, GEICO, Google Pixel 2, Grey Goose Vodka, High West Distillery, IMDbPro, Lyft, Unity Technologies and the University of Utah Health; Media Sponsors - Los



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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](#).

### **About the Sloan Foundation**

The New York-based Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, founded in 1934, is a non-profit philanthropy that makes grants for original research and education in science, technology, and economic performance. Sloan's program in Public Understanding of Science and Technology, directed by Doron Weber, supports books, radio, film, television, theater and new media to reach a wide, non-specialized audience and to bridge the two cultures of science and the humanities.

Sloan's Film Program encourages filmmakers to create more realistic and compelling stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists and engineers in the popular imagination. Over the past two decades, Sloan 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, along with an annual best-of-the best Student Grand Jury Prize administered by the Tribeca Film Institute. The Foundation also supports screenplay development programs with the Sundance Institute, Tribeca Film Institute, the San Francisco Film Society, the Black List, and Film Independent's Producing Lab and Fast Track program and has helped develop such film projects as Ben Lewin's *The Catcher Was a Spy* premiering this year at Sundance, Morten Tyldum's *The Imitation Game*, Matthew Brown's *The Man Who Knew Infinity*, and Michael Almereyda's *Experimenter*. The Foundation has also supported theatrical documentaries such as the recently released *BOMBSHELL: The Hedy Lamarr Story*, *Particle Fever*, and Jacques Perrin's *Oceans*.

The Foundation has an active theater program and commissions about twenty science plays each year from the Ensemble Studio Theatre, Manhattan Theatre Club, and the National Theatre, as well as supporting select productions across the country and abroad. Recent grants have supported Lucy Kirkwood's *Mosquitoes*, recently at the National Theatre in London, Nick Payne's *Constellations*, Lucas Hnath's *Isaac's Eye*, and Anna Ziegler's *Photograph 51*. The Foundation's book program includes early support for *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race*, the highest grossing Oscar-nominated film of 2017 and the recipient of the Sloan Science in Cinema Prize at the San Francisco Film Society in December 2016.

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