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Sundance Institute Names Latest Nonfiction Grantees

47 Projects from 27 Countries Receive Over \$1.5 Million in Grants

Los Angeles, CA — Sundance Institute today named the global cohort of independent nonfiction film projects that comprise its latest Documentary Fund Grantees, including specialized grants administered by The Kendeda Fund and the Stories of Change Fund.

Unrestricted granting support, totaling \$1.5 million, will be extended to independent nonfiction films across various stages of development, production, post-production and audience engagement; Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Fund granting is made possible by founding support from **Open Society Foundations**. This granting cycle's supported projects come from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the U.K., and the U.S.A.

"These grantees comprise a snapshot of the boldest visions in nonfiction storytelling today," said **Hajnal Molnar-Szakacs**, Director of the Documentary Film Program's Film Fund. "From the intimate to the epic, their scopes and ambitions illuminate not only the world around us, but new ways of seeing, telling and showing."

Today's slate of grantees includes the latest cohort of the **Stories of Change Fund**, a creative partnership with the **Skoll Foundation** designed to connect independent storytellers with renowned social entrepreneurs, to foster story skills and networking among these communities, and to support compelling films that inspire and enlighten audiences with solutions to urgent social issues. Over eleven years, the Stories of Change Fund has granted \$2.6 million across 49 projects from 94 filmmakers, and connected 90 social entrepreneurs with that community. Today's Stories of Change Fund-supported projects are *Awavena*, *The Concession*, *Cross My Heart*, *Decoding America*, *First Time Stories*, *Kiana's Mission*, *Kokoly*, *The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos*, *The Mystery of Epilogue* and *The Pushouts*.

Also among today's announced projects are focused grants from **The Kendeda Fund**, providing specific support for projects addressing environmental themes and the challenges of gun violence. Those projects, detailed below, are *Awavena*, *Landlock*, *Madidi*, and *Paradise*.

The latest grantees, presented by production stage and grantor, are:

DEVELOPMENT

About the End (Sweden)

Dir. Cristina Picchi

Prod. Costanza Julia Bani, Jesper Kurlandsky

A film about the apocalypses that we have survived, and those that we're still waiting for.

Airborne (India)

Dir. Shaunak Sen

Prod. Shaunak Sen

A story of Delhi's apocalyptic air is told through the black-kite and the dragonfly, and their human entanglements. Two brothers, ex body-builders, open a healing-centre for kites in their tiny garage, treating thousands of injured kites every year. An ecologist wages an absurd battle to re-settle dragonflies outside of Delhi. Together the stories of humans, birds, insects and machines weave an intimate account of living in a challenging urban ecosystem.

El Juicio – The Trial (Argentina)

Dir. Ulises de la Orden

Prod. Ulises de la Orden

Argentina, 1985, at the trial of the last dictatorship's military juntas. On the stand, the six judges; on one side, the prosecution, and on the other, the military personnel accused of genocide. In the center, the witnesses. Over 90 days, horror stories were heard. And the final sentence: Never again.

Florence From Ohio (U.S.A.)

Dir. Stephanie Wang-Breal

Prod. Carrie Weprin, Stephanie Wang-Breal

A real-life, genre-twisting film about an immigrant Chinese woman, Florence Wang, and her first-generation American daughter deconstructing their relationship with fashion, identity, race and their hometown of Youngstown, Ohio.

Softly In All Directions (U.S.A., Romania)

Dir. Anna Barsan

Prod. Shannon Fitzpatrick

A record of living history, an exploration of family lineage, and a probing of memory. Weaving together a tapestry of stories that traverse migration, political repression, and desire, the film combines a poetic and investigative approach that explores how trauma and transformation reverberate across generations.

Tailings (Brazil, U.S.A.)

Dir. Pedro de Filippis

Prod. Leonardo Mecchi, Bronte Stahl, Tarsila Nakamura

In the interval of three years, two mining tailings dams broke in Minas Gerais, Brazil, causing the country's worst socio-environmental disasters. After seeing his village washed away, an exile in Portugal attempts to digest the trauma through dance. An environmentalist is forced to leave her life of isolation for the international media spotlight. A school teacher keeps watch at night for the imminent break of a third dam that can bury his town in an estimated eight seconds.

The Weavers' Songs (Mexico)

Dir. Ismael Vásquez Bernabé

Prod. Ismael Vásquez Bernabé, Alaya Dawn Johnson

An examination of struggles within the indigenous Mexican director's community, "the village of the weavers," that exemplifies the inter-generational complexity underlying the crisis facing indigenous folk traditions throughout the Americas. The first feature-length film made entirely in the Amuzgo language, Observational filmmaking follows three principal characters: Zoila, a local weaver; Donato, the town's most famous violinist; and Lorenzo, his son. Zoila's loom creates a natural music to tell the story of the life and death of Donato—whose older son burned his violin as an instrument of the devil on the day of the funeral—and Lorenzo, Donato's younger son, who has discovered one last chance to revive his father's music, thirteen years later.

***To Use A Mountain* (U.S.A.)**

Dir. Casey Carter

Prod. Colleen Cassingham

Seconds of exposure, generations of debate, the history of nations, and epochs of geologic change - all overlap in the landscapes that define the American nuclear legacy and the quest to isolate 77,000 tons of nuclear waste for 10,000 years, entwining the rural geographies of the atomic age with the dreams, disillusionments and fortitudes of the stories that live within them.

***Vivien's Wild Ride (working title)* (U.S.A.)**

Dir. Vivien Hillgrove

Prod. Vivien Hillgrove, Janet Cole, Dawn Valadez

When veteran film editor Vivien Hillgrove discovers that she is losing her sight, she embarks on an unconventional documentary memoir. Beginning in San Francisco in the notorious 1960s, Vivien uses her adventures as an editor to reflect upon fifty years of Bay Area filmmaking, intertwined with a personal odyssey as she conjures ghosts, discovers her artistic voice, and develops a sensory survival manual.

***Your Touch Makes Others Invisible* (Sri Lanka, U.S.A.)**

Dir. Rajee Samarasinghe

Prod. Solomon Turner, Maggie Corona-Goldstein

Collaboratively developed and enacted by impacted Tamil locals, this film infuses an investigation of missing persons within a small community in Jaffna with allegorical magical realism, as memories of tortured interactions between the Tamils and the Sinhalese still linger in the aftermath of the Sri Lankan civil war.

THE KENDEDA FUND

***Landlock* (Brazil)**

Dir. Alex Pritz

Prod. Alex Pritz

When a group of right wing Brazilian farmers pushes into a new area of the Amazon rainforest, a vigilante activist and Indigenous militia must fight back in defense of the land and an uncontacted tribe living deep within it.

PRODUCTION GRANTS

***Body Parts* (U.S.A.)**

Dir. Kristy Guevara-Flanagan**Prod. Helen Hood Scheer**

An exploration of the female body in Hollywood—hyper-sexualized, under attack, exploited on- and off-screen. Driven by interviews from a wide range of perspectives and interwoven with film/television clips, animations, and verite moments, the film traces the making of sex scenes for mainstream media, the toll on those involved, and what this means for women and girls in the real world. In the aftermath of scandal and controversy, this is how the entertainment industry grapples with remedy and redemption.

Born to Be Second (China)**Dir. Jian Fan****Prod. Richard Liang, S. Leo Chiang**

After an earthquake razed a Chinese city to the ground, 5,500 families try to replace the children they lost in order to move on with their lives. Two of these families, haunted by their painful past, build towards an uncertain tomorrow.

Code for Bias (U.S.A., China)**Dir. Shalini Kantayya****Prod. Shalini Kantayya**

When MIT Media Lab researcher Joy Buolamwini made the startling discovery that most facial recognition software does not see dark-skinned faces or women with accuracy, she embarked on a journey to sound the alarm about bias in the machine-learning algorithms that impact us all. Through Joy's transformation from scientist to tireless advocate pushing for the first-ever legislation in the U.S. to govern this technology, *Code for Bias* sheds light on the threat A.I. poses to civil rights and democracy.

Geographies of Solitude (Canada)**Dir. Jacquelyn Mills****Prod. Jacquelyn Mills**

An immersion into the rich landscapes of Sable Island and the life of Zoe Lucas, a naturalist and environmentalist who has lived over 40 years on this remote strip of sand.

A Journey Into The Storm (U.S.A.)**Dir. Sandra Salas****Prod. Dwjuan Fox, Don Thompson**

For Sandy Salas, forgiveness and hope begin with a call from her nephew Lorenzo telling her he has been arrested for assaulting his wife. Having grown up in a home shattered by domestic violence, Sandy decided to help Lorenzo change his behavior and seeks the advice of experts in how to break the cycle of violence. However, in order to help her nephew, Sandy must stop running from her own traumatic past as a survivor of both domestic and gun violence, which means she must find a way to forgive a father that left scars on an entire family.

Luso-fornia (U.S.A.)**Dir. David Grabias****Prod. Anne Edgar**

LUSO-FORNIA is the state of mind of one rural area, where Portuguese immigrants annually hold religious and cultural celebrations that culminate in "bloodless" bullfights. Composed of intimate and meditative moments, *Luso-fornia* is an emotive impression of Central California's dairylands —

celebrating the unseen beauty of its residents' lives and testifying to the power of a richly constructed, communal universe

Midwives (Myanmar)

Dir. Hnin Ei Hlaing

Prod. Bob Moore, Mila Aung-Thwin, Ulla Lehman, Hnin Ei Hlaing

Two midwives work side by side in a makeshift medical clinic. Filmed over three tumultuous years, their remarkable relationship reveals both tensions and the hope inherent in their common cause.

A Private Wild (U.S.A., Canada)

Dir. Christopher LaMarca

An intimate exploration of the liminal spaces within Psychedelic Therapy. Between trauma and transcendence, an underworld of experiences is revealed.

Riotsville, U.S.A. (U.S.A.)

Dir. Sierra Pettengill

Prod. Sara Archambault, Jamila Wignot

An archival documentary about the U.S. Army's response to the riots of the late 1960s: take a military base, build a mock inner-city set, casts soldiers to play rioters, burn the place down, and film it all.

See You Friday Robinson (France)

Dir. Mitra Farahani

Prod. Mitra Farahani

Every Friday has its aphorism, its quote, its image, its edit. An email is sent from London, written by Ebrahim Golestan and a reply is sent back the following Friday from Rolle in Switzerland, written by Jean-Luc Godard. This correspondence seems to hold the promise of an encounter between two 'Gods on the run' from the twentieth century, who never found the opportunity to meet. Hypothesis, or the spark to ask ourselves: does the existence of poets still have any meaning in these times of distress? "That may be," Nora said, "but it's all pretty unsatisfactory."

Untitled (India)

Dir. Shirley Abraham, Amit Madheshiya

Prod. Shirley Abraham, Amit Madheshiya

[Withheld.]

Untitled Jamie Boyle Project (U.S.A.)

Dir. Jamie Boyle

Prod. Marilyn Ness, Elizabeth Westrate, Jamie Boyle

Spanning over 30 years, *Untitled Jamie Boyle Project* interweaves the filmmaker's personal story with one of the most pressing social issues of our time.

The Voyage Out (France, Portugal)

Dir. Ana Vaz

Prod. Ana Vaz, Anže Persin, Olivier Marboeuf

After the nuclear accident in Fukushima, a new island emerges in the Pacific south of Japan. A staging,, in a dreamlike and experimental form, of the sensitive imaginary of these two places, and the way in which they compose a world traversed by specters of destruction and renewal.

We Are Inside (Lebanon)

Dir. Farah Kassem

Prod. Cynthia Choucair

After a decade away, thirty-one-year old Farah returns to her hometown of Tripoli in Lebanon, to see find city getting increasingly conservative. But there is a secret refuge: her eighty-three year old father Mustapha's weekly all-male classical Arabic poetry club.

Zinder (France, Niger, Germany, South Africa)

Dir. Aicha Macky

Prod. Clara Vuillermoz, Ousmane Samassekou, Erik Winker, Don Edkins

Unemployed youths are swelling the ranks of gangs sowing violence in Zinder, Niger. Aicha Macky explores the origins of the radicalization in her hometown and the prospects for escaping it.

THE KENDEDA FUND

Paradise (Philippines, U.S.A.)

Dir. Karl Malakunas

Prod. Marty Syjuco, Michael Collins

A charismatic lawyer leads good men to their deaths, an ex-illegal logger seeks redemption, a grandmother politician defies assassination threats... three environmental crusaders confront murder, betrayal and their own demons as they are tested like never before in their battle to save an island paradise in the Philippines.

STORIES OF CHANGE FUND

The Concession (U.K.)

Dir. Jerry Rothwell, Sam Liebmann

Prod. Jerry Rothwell

In the struggle for land justice, a community living beside Africa's largest iron ore mine finds the law is a weapon to defend their rights.

Decoding America (U.S.A.)

Sr. Audio Prod. David DesRoches

Prod. Elizabeth Lodge Stepp and Michael Gottwald

A documentary podcast that explores the litany of harmful and yet often unintentional ways that technology now decides who survives and thrives in the 21st century.

First Time Stories (India)

Dir. Shirley Abraham, Amit Madheshiya

Prod. Shirley Abraham, Amit Madheshiya

In 2019, widespread deforestation and logging has caused 73,000 fires to rage in the Amazonian rainforest. With the fires visible from space, a farmwoman and a hunter in the rainforest struggle to protect their antiquated way of life and livelihood against the march of modernity. Meanwhile, as a missionary seeks to reach the souls of the remaining uncontacted tribes in the Amazon, a community elder patrols and protects them from human contact.

Kiana's Mission (U.S.A.)

Dir. Kiana Calloway, Carl Byker

Prod. Carl Byker

The story of one man's journey: from a ten year-old boy in New Orleans – the city that incarcerates a higher percentage of its young men than any other place on earth -- to serving sixteen years in Angola Prison for a crime he didn't commit, to a stunning transformation into a dynamic anti-recidivism activist who has dedicated his life to helping destroy the mass incarceration system.

The Legend of the Vagabond Queen of Lagos (Nigeria, South Africa)

Collaborating Directors: James Tayler, Samuel Okechukwu, Temitope Ogungbamila, Bisola Akinmuyiwa, Elijah Atinkpo, Tina Edukpo

Prod. Beth Chitekwe-Biti, Temitope Ogungbamila, Elijah Atinkpo, Samuel Okechukwu, Bisola Akinmuyiwa, Mohammed Zanna

A young mother from a waterfront slum in Lagos stumbles upon a horde of corrupt blood money. Her journey follows her evolution from isolated individual to unifying force, in a community that stands to lose everything.

The Mystery of Epilogue (Denmark)

Dir. Feras Fayyad

Prod. Kirstine Barfod, Sigrid Dyekjaer

A group of Syrian lawyers attempts to re-establish the rule of law amid the collapse of justice during the chaotic war-torn world of Syria. The film is a window for understanding the power of justice facing the absurdity of the Syrian war.

POST-PRODUCTION GRANTS

Aswang (Philippines, France, Norway, Germany, Qatar)

Dir. Alyx Ayn Arumpac

Prod. Armi Rae Cacanindin

When Rodrigo Duterte is voted president of the Philippines, he sets in motion a fatal machinery of death to execute suspected drug peddlers, users, and small-time criminals: an exploration of the. Aswang follows people whose fates entwine with the growing violence during two years of killings in Manila.

Israel and the Evangelical Christians (working title) (Israel, U.K.)

Dir. Maya Zinshtein

Prod. John Battsek, Abraham (AB) Troen, Maya Zinshtein

An in-depth look into the unique bond between Evangelical Christianity and the Jewish State. Set in Israel and the U.S.A., the film weaves together the stories of individuals from two initially separate Jewish and Christian communities as they intersect to reveal a unique faith-based alliance.

It's Her Story (Hungary)

Dir. Asia Dér, Sári Haragonics

Prod. Noémi Veronika Szakonyi, Sára László, Marcell Gerő

An intimate journey of two Hungarian women and a little Roma girl in their struggle to become a family in the shadow of a radicalizing country.

North By Current (U.S.A.)

Dir. Angelo Madsen Minax

Prod. Felix Endara

Filmmaker Angelo Madsen Minax returns to his home town after the mysterious death of his two-year-old niece and the arrest of his brother-in-law as the culprit. Weaving the real and imagined links between death, incarceration, and trans embodiment, Madsen probes the family's history of addiction and Mormonism to create a relentless portrait of an enduring rural kinship.

The Messy Truth (working title) (U.S.A.)

Dir. Brandon Kramer

Prod. Lance Kramer

After the 2016 election – which he famously called “a whitelash, in part” on live TV – progressive activist and media commentator Van Jones felt he had two options: add to the discord, or try to bridge the divides. Risking his reputation and career, Jones attempts to build bipartisan support for criminal justice legislation and unite citizens impacted by the addiction crisis, in a journey that takes him deep into the messy drama of the Trump administration and America’s polarized politics.

A Photographic Memory (U.S.A.)

Dir. Rachel Elizabeth Seed

Prod. Rachel Elizabeth Seed, Danielle Varga

A photographer attempts to piece together a portrait of her mother, Sheila Turner-Seed, a daring journalist and a woman she never knew. Uncovering the vast audio-visual archive Turner-Seed produced, including lost interviews with iconic photographers, the film explores memory, legacy and stories left untold.

Truth or Consequences (U.S.A.)

Dir. Hannah Jayanti

Prod. Sara Archambault

A speculative documentary about a small desert town in southern New Mexico. Set in a near-future when humans are leaving Earth for other planets, the film tells the story of the people who stayed.

The Viewing Booth (U.S.A., Israel)

Dir. Ra'anán Alexandrowicz

Prod. Ra'anán Alexandrowicz, Liran Atzmor

Provocative in its cinematic simplicity, a recounting of an encounter between a filmmaker and a viewer, exploring the way meaning is attributed to non-fiction images in today’s day and age.

THE KENDEDA FUND

Madidi (working title) (U.S.A.)

Dir. Elizabeth Unger

Prod. Elizabeth Unger

In the heart of the Amazon, large numbers of jaguars are being quietly decimated for the Chinese black market – and the world has no idea. Desperate for answers, a Bolivian park ranger and a young Chinese journalist dive into the dark underbelly of the trade and risk their lives to reveal the truth.

IMPACT

STORIES OF CHANGE FUND

Cross My Heart (Philippines)

Dir. Kip Oebanda

Prod. N/A

Episodic shorts that subvert popular romantic comedies and soap operas to tell the story of two different young women trapped in the world of human trafficking.

Kokoly (Madagascar)

Dir. Garth Cripps, Paul Antion

Prod. Martin Muir

Kokoly follows a traditional Vezo fisherwoman Madame Kokoly as she reflects on her life experiences and carries out her daily routine in and around the coastal waters of southwest Madagascar. Against a backdrop of extreme poverty, personal loss and a marine environment changing beyond her control, Kokoly lives on a knife edge.

The Pushouts (U.S.A.)

Dir. Katie Galloway

Prod. Katie Galloway, Dawn Valadez, Daniella Brower Sueuga

"I was in prison before I was even born." So begins the story of Dr. Victor Rios who, by 15, was a high school "dropout," heroin dealer, and Oakland gang member with multiple felony convictions and a death wish. But when a teacher's quiet persistence, a mentor's moral conviction, and his best friend's murder converge, Rios's path takes an unexpected turn.

STORIES OF CHANGE FUND & THE KENDEDA FUND

Awavena (U.S.A., Australia, Brazil)

Dir. Lynette Wallworth

Prod. Nicole Newnham, Co-Producers: Tashka Yawanawa, Laura Yawanawa

For the Amazonian Yawanawa, 'medicine' has the power to take you inside a vision to a place you have never been. By collaborating with artist Lynette Wallworth, Hushahu, the first woman shaman of the Yawanawa, is able to use VR like medicine, to open a portal to another way of knowing. *Awavena* is a collaboration between a community and an artist, melding technology and transcendent experience so that a vision can be shared, and a story told of a people ascending from the edge of extinction.

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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 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. [Sundance Collab](#), a digital community platform, brings artists together to learn from each other and Sundance Advisors and connect in a creative space, developing and sharing works in progress. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences and artists to ignite new ideas, discover original voices, and build a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *The Farewell*, *Late Night*, *The Souvenir*, *The Infiltrators*, *Sorry to Bother You*, *Eighth Grade*, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, *Hereditary*, *RBG*, *Call Me By Your Name*, *Get Out*, *The Big Sick*, *Top of the Lake*, *Winter's Bone*, *Dear White People*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *State of the Union*, *Indecent*, *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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