

Sundance Institute Presents Film Forward: Advancing Cultural Dialogue

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LOS ANGELES, CA ([RPRN](#))
10/04/10 — Institute joins with the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Institute for Museum and Library Services in a Public/Private Cultural

Exchange Initiative

-- Sundance Institute, the global nonprofit arts organization, today announced it has been selected to represent the private sector in a unique program entitled Film Forward: Advancing Cultural Dialogue. This program continues the exceptional public/private cultural exchange effort by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) in cooperation with its federal cultural partners, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), to foster cross-cultural understanding through cinematic storytelling.

The nonprofit Sundance Institute was founded by Robert Redford with an initial grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1981. Said Redford, "Film Forward brings the Institute full circle and helps further our mission of supporting and promoting independent storytelling around the world."

Film Forward: Advancing Cultural Dialogue chooses a carefully curated group of 10 contemporary independent films, five American and five international, and invites the filmmakers to present their works in selected locations in both the United States and at American embassies and other venues abroad. Master classes, discussion panels, Q&As and other engagements between filmmaker and audience are programmed around the screenings in all locations, cultivating engaged dialogue, fostering appreciation of other viewpoints and developing new audiences for independent film. The project will launch in New York in December of 2010 and conclude in September, 2011, with all of the films screening next spring at a gala showcase in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

“We are honored to partner with our nation’s leading cultural entities that share a commitment to cultural exchange,” said Keri Putnam, Executive Director, Sundance Institute. “Film Forward is an important step in advancing our founder Robert Redford’s original vision of making independent storytelling accessible and relevant throughout the world. We believe that film has the power both to reflect our cultural diversity and to connect people, and we are thrilled to be bringing these wonderful films and their filmmakers to diverse audiences.”

“There is no better way for people to know one another than by sharing their personal journeys. Films tell powerful stories that inspire curiosity, recognition and an awareness of shared values beyond generations, language and borders,” said Margo Lion, PCAH Co-Chair. “The Committee is excited to be working with the internationally acclaimed Sundance Institute,

whose extensive experience in nurturing the next generation of film artists, as well as their successful efforts in bridging cultures, will propel this cultural diplomacy effort in new directions.”

Film Forward: Advancing Cultural Dialogue is a continuation of the President’s Committee and cultural partners’ efforts to use film to engage diverse audiences in the U.S. and internationally, including a successful four year effort in partnership with the American Film Institute as AFI: Project 20/20. Over the past four years that program has brought together 42 filmmakers representing the United States and 21 other countries as cultural ambassadors, who have traveled to 18 countries and 18 cities within the U.S.

The intimate approach of using one-on-one exchange between artists and audiences capitalizes on the nonprofit Sundance Institute’s own cross-programmatic international and U.S.-based initiatives to deepen and enhance cross-cultural understanding. The Institute is committed to creative collaboration and plans to engage closely with its large network of national and international film associations, universities, libraries, arts and humanities councils, museums as well as similar cultural organizations for public outreach, education and engagement.

The federal cultural partners in Film Forward: Advancing Cultural Dialogue said the following about the new partnership with the nonprofit Sundance Institute and the international exchange initiative:

“Art is often an expression of shared values and works to create connections among seemingly disparate groups. We are proud to be investing in Sundance Institute’s Film Forward program to help bring international films to American audiences, and to share American film makers and films with new audiences across the globe”, said NEA Chairman Rocco Landesman.

"Film is a powerful medium that can capture and convey the stories of people and places in the United States and around the world," said Carole Watson, National Endowment for the Humanities Deputy Chairman. "Sharing these stories internationally bridges cultures, a goal of the National Endowment for

the Humanities. The NEH is pleased to welcome the Sundance Institute to this important cultural diplomacy initiative."

"The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is proud to support the Film Forward initiative. This program fosters information sharing all over the world, strengthens cross-cultural connections, and enhances global awareness. These are all essential skills of a 21st century citizen," said IMLS Acting Director Marsha L. Semmel.

Federal Partners

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) bridges the interests of federal agencies and the private sector, supports special projects that increase participation and excellence in the arts and humanities, and helps incorporate these disciplines into White House objectives. First Lady Michelle Obama is the Honorary Chairman of the PCAH.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts, both new and established; bringing the arts to all Americans; and providing leadership in arts education.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) serves and strengthens our Republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans. The NEH is the nation's leading supporter of research education, preservation and public programs in the humanities.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is an independent federal grant making agency dedicated to creating strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The IMLS works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development.

Sundance Institute

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a global, nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to nurturing artistic expression in film and theater, and to supporting intercultural dialogue between artists and audiences. The Institute promotes independent storytelling to unite, inform and inspire, regardless of geo-political, social, religious or cultural differences. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival and its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as Born into Brothels, Trouble the Water, Son of Babylon, Amreeka, An Inconvenient Truth, Spring Awakening, Light in the Piazza and Angels in America. www.sundance.org

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Media Contacts:

Sundance Institute: NEA: NEH: IMLS:

Victoria Hutter Paula Wasley

202. 682. 5692 202. 606.8424

hutterv@arts.gov pwasley@neh.gov

Media Contact Name: Brooks Addicott

Media E-mail: brooks_addicott@sundance.org

Media Phone: 435.658.3456

Company Contact Name: Mamie Bittner

Company E-mail: mbittner@imls.gov

Company Phone: 202.653.4630

About the author:

Sundance Institute

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a not-for-profit organization that fosters the development of original storytelling in film and theatre, and presents the annual Sundance Film Festival. Internationally

recognized for its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as Angels in America, Spring Awakening, Boys Don't Cry, Sin Nombre, Born into Brothels and Trouble the Water. www.sundance.org.

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