



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES
FILM FORWARD: ADVANCING CULTURAL DIALOGUE
TRAVELS TO IMPERIAL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA AND MEXICALI, MEXICO APRIL 30-MAY 4

Imperial County Film Commission and Mexicali Rose Collaborate with Sundance Institute to Bring FILM FORWARD to Local Students, Community Members, Artists and Filmmakers

Imperial, CA — Sundance Institute announced today that FILM FORWARD: Advancing Cultural Dialogue, a program that promotes cultural dialogue through independent documentary and narrative film, will travel to Imperial Valley and Mexicali from April 30 through May 4. The Imperial County Film Commission and Mexicali Rose Media/Arts Center will present the FILM FORWARD program, which includes 10 films, filmmaker appearances and workshops, at multiple cities in the Imperial Valley including Calexico, Brawley, El Centro and Ocotillo in the U.S. and Mexicali in Mexico. All FILM FORWARD screenings are free of charge and open to the public.

“Based on the success of our recent documentary lab in Imperial Valley, we know that there is a very engaged and enthusiastic public in the area, we look forward to sharing this group of films with them,” said Keri Putnam, Executive Director of Sundance Institute. “The films in the Film Forward program beautifully illustrate the common humanity and concerns of all of us across all boundaries and we hope to continue building cultural bridges which encourage discourse, the creation of new ideas and a meaningful cross-cultural dialogue.”

FILM FORWARD is an initiative of Sundance Institute and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Program collaborators, the Imperial Valley Film Commission and Mexicali Rose, will present the programs locally with the support of area organizations including Imperial Valley College, Imperial Valley Desert Museum, Camarena Memorial Library, the Stockmen’s Club, as well as local High Schools and Universities in Imperial Valley and Mexicali along with CEART and the Quechan Casino.

Filmmakers Rachel Perkins (*Bran Nue Dae*) and Cindy Meehl (*Buck*) will be in attendance to participate in Q&As, discussions, workshops and meet-and-greet events with local communities at multiple destinations throughout Imperial Valley and in Mexicali. Sundance Institute’s Meredith Lavitt, Associate Director, FILM FORWARD; and Jacqueline Carlson, Manager, FILM FORWARD will also be in attendance.

For a full schedule of FILM FORWARD screenings and events in Imperial Valley visit:
<http://www.sundance.org/filmforward/destination/california-2012/>.

The films participating in the FILM FORWARD program represent a powerful exploration of universal themes that provide an avenue for greater cultural understanding. All 10 films collectively illustrate coming-of-age stories, explore identity and reveal the transformation process, both political and personal. *Somewhere Between* follows the story of four Chinese-American girls struggling with their Identity as they grow into young women, and *Senna* follows the life of legendary Formula One driver, who became a national treasure and symbol of success for Brazil. *On the Ice* navigates the rocky landscape of adolescence; *The Green Wave* depicts the challenges and resourcefulness of a country and people in conflict; *Beginners* explores the relationship between father and son and the endurance of love; *Unfinished Spaces* shows the collision between art and politics; *Grbavica* reveals the scars of war as a mother and daughter struggle through post-war Sarajevo and ultimately the strength of family; *Bran Nue Dae* is a musical coming of age story told from the Australian outback; *Buck*, the story of Buck

Brannaman and his extraordinary work with horses, and *Another Earth* about the lives of two strangers whose lives become intertwined after the discovery of a duplicate Earth.

A total of 10 films and filmmakers from the U.S. and abroad were selected by Sundance Institute and the partners to participate in the 2012 FILM FORWARD program, traveling to four domestic and five international locations. Filmmakers participate in screenings, extended Q&As, workshops, and master classes at Universities, film and cultural centers, museums, libraries and other community, educational, and cultural venues cultivating engaged dialogue, fostering appreciation of other viewpoints, and developing new audiences for independent film.

2012 FILM FORWARD Films

Another Earth / USA (Director: Mike Cahill) — After the discovery of a duplicate Earth, tragedy strikes, and the lives of these strangers become irrevocably intertwined. When one of them is presented with the opportunity to travel to the other Earth and embrace an alternative reality, which new life will they choose? Cast: Brit Marling (also a co-writer), William Mapother, Matthew-Lee Erlbach

Beginners / USA (Director: Mike Mills) — BEGINNERS imaginatively explores the hilarity, confusion, and surprises of love through the evolving consciousness of Oliver, whose life is rocked by two announcements from his elderly father: that he has terminal cancer, and that he has a young male lover. Cast: Ewan McGregor, Christopher Plummer, Melanie Laurent

Bran Nue Dae / Australia (Director: Rachel Perkins) — This musical, set in the Summer of 1969, tells the story of a young man who flees the Catholic mission where he is studying to join the priesthood. He journeys across Australia on a life-changing journey that ultimately leads him back home. Cast: Rocky McKenzie, Jessica Mauboy, Geoffrey Rush

Buck / USA (Director: Cindy Meehl) — BUCK profiles famous “horse whisperer” Buck Brannaman, tracing his life from an abusive childhood to his career as a world-renowned horse handler and trainer. By teaching people to communicate with horses through instinct, not punishment, he frees the spirit of the horse and its human comrade.

Grbavica / Bosnia and Herzegovina (Director: Jasmila Zbanic) — GRBAVICA explores the painful long-term effects of war on a Bosnian woman and her daughter as they struggle to make a life in post-war Sarajevo. Removing the veil from the ultimate taboo of the war in the Balkans, the use of rape as a weapon, the film reveals that the post-war denial of this war crime is as devastating as the crime itself. Cast: Mirjana Karanovic, Luna Mijovic, Leon Lucev.

The Green Wave / Germany (Director: Ali Samadi Ahadi) — Ali Samadi Ahadi’s timely documentary reveals how Iranian civilians reacted to the 2009 Iranian Presidential elections. Using actual footage of the protests as well as interviews with Iranian bloggers and political leaders, Ahadi paints a compelling portrait of a nation on the brink of revolution.

On the Ice / USA (Director: Andrew Okpeaha MacLean) — Two Alaskan teenagers deal with guilt and a web of deceit after accidentally killing a friend in a fight that got out of control. With their future in the balance, the two boys are forced to explore the limits of friendship and honor. Cast: Frank Ireland, Adamina Kerr, John Miller

Senna / UK (Director: Asif Kapadia) — The story of Ayrton Senna, perhaps the greatest race car driver who ever lived, is an epic tale that literally twists at every turn. Facing titanic struggles, he conquered Formula One and became a global icon who was idolized in his home country.

Somewhere Between / USA (Director: Linda Goldstein Knowlton) — *Somewhere Between* tells the story of four teenaged girls adjusting to life in the US after their Chinese birth parents are forced to part with them due to China’s “One-Child” policy. The film provides an intimate look into the lives of teenage adoptees as they come to terms with their unique identities.

Unfinished Spaces (Directors: Benjamin Murray, Alysa Nahmias)— Fidel Castro invites 3 exiled architects back to Cuba to finish work on art school they started 40 years ago. Featuring intimate footage of Fidel Castro, the documentary offers a remarkable view into Cuba's past, present, and future.

Upcoming FILM FORWARD Tour Dates

Morocco: May 6-13

Colombia: July 9-14

Puerto Rico: August 22-26

Oklahoma: September 6-8

UNESCO, Paris: September dates tbd

Imperial County Film Commission

The Imperial County Film Commission is a nonprofit organization proactively marketing Imperial County as a destination for the motion picture, television and related industries, for the purpose of stimulating economic development, creating jobs, providing and supporting educational opportunities in Imperial County.

Imperial Valley College

Serving about 11,800 students last year, Imperial Valley College is comprised of one main campus (160 acres) in the midst of rich agricultural land, and an extended campus. The main campus consists of over 30 buildings situated on a beautifully landscaped corner, adjacent to major highways for ease of commute. The Imperial Valley College student population consists of 86% Hispanic students; 63% of total students are female. The average age of IVC students is 27 years, and more than 50% of the students work full or part time while attending IVC.

Mexicali Rose

Mexicali Rose is a grass roots communitarian organization dedicated to providing free access to artistic media for the community youth of Mexicali, Baja California. Mexicali Rose Media/Arts Center is located in the neighborhood of Pueblo Nuevo, one of the city's oldest and most vibrant areas historically and the area closest in physical vicinity to the U.S./Mexico border. The organizers were brought up and are based in this region and recognize a real need for different options for the youth of this community.

The purpose of this project is to give bordertown youth an avenue to express themselves and reflect their environment creatively and positively through art. By giving this craft to communities who might not otherwise have any media-related voice or capabilities, the project serves as a positive alternative to a new generation. Through art, kids can express and affect the issues that they are undergoing as young people in a place as culturally diverse and challenging as the U.S./Mexico border.

The target age for the youth involved in this artistic community is 14-25 years of age.

FILM FORWARD: Advancing Cultural Dialogue

FILM FORWARD: Advancing Cultural Dialogue is an international cultural exchange program designed to enhance cross-cultural understanding, collaboration and dialogue around the globe by engaging audiences through the exhibition of film and conversation with filmmakers. FILM FORWARD is an Initiative of Sundance Institute and The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Federal Partners

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) bridges the interests of American 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), an independent federal agency, provides support for documentary films, digital media and other educational programs in the humanities through competitive grant programs. 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*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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