



Film Forward: Advancing Cultural Dialogue 2012

Film Forward: Advancing Cultural Dialogue is an international cultural exchange program of the Sundance Institute and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Drawing on the joint resources and expertise of these partners, Film Forward engages audiences here and abroad through American and International contemporary films and their makers, opening doors to other ideas, cultures and places.

The experiences with the first year (2010-2011) of the Film Forward program demonstrated the power of film to create connections through dialogue and engagement with audiences. In China, students said they felt empowered by *Freedom Riders* and its story of the Civil Right struggle despite the repression of their government. In Nashville, a young boy in a shelter for at-risk youth asked director Peter Bratt how he could become a screenwriter and tell his story. Throughout the year these encounters were typical of the filmmaker's experiences, whose stories and voice are at the heart of the program.

This year another ten films and filmmakers from the U.S. and abroad were selected by Sundance Institute and the partners to participate in this program. They will travel to eight locations, reaching a number of underserved communities in: the Central Valley of California, the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, Tucson, Arizona, and Puerto Rico. The initiative will also travel overseas to China, Morocco, India and Colombia and will be presented to delegates at UNESCO in Paris, France. At each site, filmmakers will hold screenings, extended Q&A's, workshops, and master classes at universities, film and cultural centers, museums, libraries and other community, educational, and cultural venues. Last year, more than 118,000 people attended 116 presentations and more than 30 workshops and panels worldwide conducted by Film Forward's filmmakers and other film professionals.

Film Forward builds on a previous PCAH public/private collaboration to support and advocate the use of film in cultural diplomacy. Representing various countries, Film Forward's multicultural roster of films challenges audiences to examine, reflect and celebrate diversity. The U.S. Embassies overseas add value and are critical partners of the Film Forward in developing quality screenings and programs abroad.

Film Forward Films and Filmmakers 2011-2012

International

BRAN NUE DAE

2009, Australia

Director: Rachel Perkins

Genre: Narrative

SYNOPSIS BRAN NUE DAE is a charming Australian-based, music-driven road movie/romantic comedy starring Academy Award winner Geoffrey Rush that literally bursts onto the screen with unbridled energy and fun. Loosely based on one of Australia's most beloved and popular musicals, BRAN NUE DAE is a foot stomping tour-de-force centering on the romantic adventures of a young aboriginal couple set against the spectacularly beautiful Australia landscape.

BIOGRAPHY Rachel Perkins is from the Arrernte and Kalkadoon nations of Australia. She trained at the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) in Alice Springs and is also a graduate of the Australian Film Television and Radio School. Perkins was employed for six years as an executive producer of the Indigenous Television Units at SBS and the ABC. She has independently produced and directed a number of documentary series including Blood Brothers and From Spirit to Spirit - the first international Indigenous co-production of Aboriginal, Maori, Sami and Native Canadian crews. She financed the first Indigenous drama initiative for the Australian Film Commission and produced three short films under these successful initiatives.

Perkins has directed two multi-award winning feature films, RADIANCE and ONE NIGHT THE MOON (which she also co-wrote). These films have screened at the Berlin, London, Toronto, Moscow and Sundance film festivals. Radiance (winner of an AFI and Film Critics Circle Award for Best Actress and Australian Screen Sound Guild Award) is unique in being voted most popular film at the Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra film festivals. ONE NIGHT THE MOON is the winner of two AFI Open Craft Awards - Sound and Cinematography, two Film Critics Circle Awards for Best Score and The Special Achievement Award recognizing Perkins's unique combination of sound, image and music, an Australian Cinematographers Society Award and two AWGIE (Australian Writers' Guild) Awards including the Golden AWGIE. One Night The Moon has screened at 70 film festivals worldwide and received the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival Award for Best Feature Film – Musical. Perkins was one of the directors, co-writers and producers of the seven-hour documentary series First Australians, which screened on SBS in 2008 and was awarded the Logie Award for Most Outstanding Documentary. This series, produced by Perkins's company Blackfella Films, is the largest budget documentary series to be undertaken in Australia. Perkins has been active in the development of the Australian film industry, which was acknowledged in 2002 with her being presented the AFI's Byron Kennedy Award. Since 2000, she has edited Australia's largest directory of Indigenous media and the arts, www.blackbook.afc.gov.au.

GRBAVICA

2006, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Director: Jasmila Zbanic

Genre: Narrative

SYNOPSIS In her stunning debut feature, writer/director Jasmila Žbanic explores the painful long-term effects of war on a Bosnian woman and her daughter. Esmā is a single mother who lives with her 12-year old daughter, Sara, in the Grbavica district of Sarajevo, a neighborhood once used as an internment camp during the Yugoslav wars. Unable to get by on government aid, Esmā works two jobs to make ends meet. When Sara wants to go on a school trip, questions arise about her father, who is supposed to have died as a war martyr. Gradually, Sara comes to realize that her mother has never told her the truth about the war years, and the truth threatens to tear them apart.

BIOGRAPHY Born in Sarajevo on December 19th 1974, Jasmila Zbanic is a graduate of the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, Department for theater and film directing. Before filmmaking, she worked as a puppeteer in Vermont-based "Bread and Puppet" theater and as a clown in a Lee DeLong workshop. In 1997, together with her friends, she founded Artist's Association "Deblokada" through which she produced, wrote and directed many documentaries, video-art works and shorts and among them feature film GRBAVICA, awarded with Golden Bear on Berlinale 2006 and, her latest feature film ON THE PATH (Berlinale Competition).

THE GREEN WAVE

2010, Germany

Director: Ali Samadi Ahadi

Genre: Documentary

SYNOPSIS Green is the color of hope. Green is the color of Islam. And Green was the symbol of recognition among the supporters of presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who became the symbolic figure of the Green Revolution in Iran last year. The presidential elections on June 12th, 2009 were supposed to bring about a change, but contrary to all expectations the ultra-conservative populist Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was confirmed in office. As clear as was the result, as loud and justified were the accusations of vote-rigging. The on-going "Where is my vote?" protest demonstrations were again and again worn down and broken up with brutal attacks by government militia. Images taken from private persons with their cell phones or cameras bear witness to this excessive violence: people were beaten, stabbed, shot dead, arrested, kidnapped, some of them disappearing without trace. What remains is the countless number of dead or injured people and victims of torture, and another deep wound in the hearts of the Iranians. THE GREEN WAVE is a touching documentary-collage illustrating the dramatic events and telling about the feelings of the people behind this revolution. Facebook reports, Twitter messages and videos posted in the internet were included in the film composition, and hundreds of real blog entries served as reference for the experiences and thoughts of two young students, whose story is running through the film as the main thread. The film describes their initial hope and curiosity, their desperate fear, and the courage to yet continue to fight. These fictional 'storylines' have been animated as a motion comic – sort of a moving comic – framing the deeply affecting pictures of the revolution and the

interviews with prominent human rights campaigners and exiled Iranians. Ali Samadi Ahadi's documentary is a highly contemporary chronicle of the Green Revolution and a memorial for all of those who believed in more freedom and lost their lives for it.

BIOGRAPHY Director and author Ali Samadi Ahadi was born in 1972 in the north Iranian city of Tabriz. In 1985, when he was 12 years old, he came to Germany without his family and later took his final secondary exam, Abitur, in Hannover. In Kassel he studied visual communication with the focus on film and television. At the end of the 90's he started his career as a filmmaker. He participated in several documentaries and reports as director, film editor or cinematographer. For his documentary CULTURE CLAN he was nominated for the Rose d'Or award, and in Cape Town he won the Channel O Award in the category of "Best Foreign Music Film". Literally a flood of awards followed soon after for his documentary LOST CHILDREN in co-production with Oliver Stoltz, which won the German Film Award 2006 as well as numerous international awards (among others the UNICEF Award, Al Jazeera Award). Recently, Ahadi made his first feature film SALAMI ALEIKUM, in 2009 reaching a top position in the Arthouse charts with this culture clash comedy.

SENNA

2010, United Kingdom

Director: Asif Kapadia

Genre: Documentary

SYNOPSIS The story of Ayrton Senna, perhaps the greatest race car driver who ever lived, is an epic tale that literally twists at every turn. In the mid-1980s, Senna, a young, gifted driver, exploded onto the world of Formula One racing. As a Brazilian in a predominantly European sport, a purist in a world polluted with backroom deals, and a man of faith in an arena filled with cynicism, Senna had to fight hard—both on and off the track. Facing titanic struggles, he conquered Formula One and became a global icon that was idolized in his home country. Told solely through the use of archival footage, Asif Kapadia's documentary is a thrill ride worthy of its daring subject. Adrenaline will be pumping as cameras from inside Senna's car put you smack-dab in the driver's seat. Buckle your seat belt; SENNA will take you on a trip you do not want to miss.

BIOGRAPHY Asif Kapadia is known for his visually striking films. He has an interest in exploring the lives of 'outsiders', characters living in timeless, extreme and unforgiving circumstances or landscapes. His films have been awarded and distributed internationally and shown how versatile and expressive British cinema can be. Born in Hackney, London in 1972, Kapadia studied filmmaking at the Royal College of Art where he first gained recognition with his short film THE SHEEP THIEF (1977) telling the story of a gifted street-kid and the family who take him in, made with non-professional actors in Rajasthan, India. The film won many awards including Second Prize at the 1998 Cannes International Film Festival (Cinefondation), the Grand Prix at the 1997 European Short Film Festival in Brest and Best Director at the Poitiers Film Festival 1997. Kapadia's distinct visual style continued with his first feature THE WARRIOR shot in the deserts of Rajasthan and the snowcapped Himalayas. THE 24 WARRIOR was championed in the British Press as 'epic' and 'stunning' and won two BAFTA awards for Outstanding British Film of the Year and The Carl Foreman Award for Special Achievement by a Director in their First Feature. FAR NORTH (2004) premiered at the

Venice Film Festival, based on a dark short story by Sara Maitland. Kapadia used the epic and brutal arctic landscape to show how desperation and loneliness drive a woman to harm the person she loves the most.

Domestic

ANOTHER EARTH

2011, USA

Director: Mike Cahill

Genre: Narrative

SYNOPSIS Rhoda Williams, a bright young woman recently accepted into MIT's astrophysics program, aspires to explore the cosmos. John Burroughs, a brilliant composer, has just reached the pinnacle of his profession, and is about to have a second child with his loving wife. On the eve of the discovery of a duplicate Earth, tragedy strikes, and the lives of these strangers become irrevocably intertwined. Estranged from the world and the selves they once knew, the two outsiders begin an unlikely love affair, which reawakens them to life. But 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? In this auspicious debut, director/co-writer Mike Cahill offers a taut, superbly conceived science-fiction romance that marks the emergence of the multitalented actor/co-writer Brit Marling

BIOGRAPHY Mike Cahill was born July 5, 1979 in New Haven, CT. Since a young age, Mike would experiment with filmmaking on Fisher Price and VHS camcorders. While studying Economics at Georgetown, he bought a Hi8 camera from a pawnshop and taught himself how to edit on Adobe Premiere. Instead of pursuing a career in economics, Mike began working for National Geographic, first as an intern, but within a few months became the youngest field producer, editor and cinematographer on the NG staff.

After several years filming sharks, turtles and other sea life for the Crittercam series, Mike moved to Cuba for a year to make the award-winning documentary, BOXERS AND BALLERINAS. He later migrated to Los Angeles where he worked on various docs – he edited Sundance 2006 films, LEONARD COHEN I'M YOUR MAN and EVERYONE STARES: THE POLICE INSIDE OUT; he also produced and directed several episodes of MTV's Emmy Award winning series True Life. Additionally, Mike creates video art under the name Day Old Teeth, and he directed The Hand of God installation that showed in March 2009 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. In December of 2009, Mike decided to make his first narrative feature film – ANOTHER EARTH, which he directed, co-wrote, produced, shot and edited. The indie sci-fi drama was accepted to the dramatic competition at Sundance 2011, where it won the Special Jury Award and the Sloan Prize, and was picked up by Fox Searchlight. Mike is developing several feature projects; among them is one of reincarnation and another about a fashion designer who lives at the bottom of the sea. Currently, Mike resides in Brooklyn, NY.

BEGINNERS

2010, USA

Director: Mike Mills

Genre: Narrative

SYNOPSIS When it comes to relationships, we're all beginners. From writer/director Mike Mills comes *BEGINNERS*, a comedy/drama about how deeply funny and transformative life can be, even at its most serious moments. *BEGINNERS* imaginatively explores the hilarity, confusion, and surprises of love through the evolving consciousness of Oliver (Golden Globe Award nominee Ewan McGregor). Oliver meets the irreverent and unpredictable Anna (Mélanie Laurent of *Inglourious Basterds*) only months after his father Hal Fields (Academy Award nominee Christopher Plummer) has passed away. This new love floods Oliver with memories of his father, who, following the death of his wife of 45 years, came out of the closet at age 75 to live a full, energized, and wonderfully tumultuous gay life – which included a younger boyfriend, Andy (Goran Visnjic of *ER*). The upheavals of Hal's new honesty, by turns funny and moving, bring father and son closer together than they'd ever been able to be. Now Oliver endeavors to love Anna with all the bravery, humor, and hope that his father taught him. At once deeply personal and universal, *BEGINNERS* was inspired by Mike Mills' own father and is meant in turn to inspire everyone weighing their chances and choices in life and love.

BIOGRAPHY Mike Mills works as a filmmaker, graphic designer, and artist. As a filmmaker, he has completed a number of music videos, commercials, short films, documentaries and feature films. His short 13 films have premiered at the Sundance, Oberhausen, Stockholm International, New Directors/New Films and Rotterdam film festivals. He adapted and directed his first feature, *THUMBSUCKER* (2005), from Walter Kirn's novel of the same name. The movie won awards at the Sundance and Berlin film festivals for lead actor Lou Taylor Pucci, and Mr. Mills was honored with the Guardian New Directors award at the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

His next feature as director was the documentary *DOES YOUR SOUL HAVE A COLD?* (2007). In 1996, he and Roman Coppola co-founded The Directors Bureau (TDB), a multidisciplinary production company through which he has directed music videos for such bands as Air, Pulp, Everything but the Girl, Les Rythmes Digitales, Moby, Yoko Ono, and the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion; and commercials for such clients as Levi's, Gap, Volkswagen, Adidas and Nike as part of their international campaigns. As a graphic artist, Mr. Mills has designed album covers for such bands as Sonic Youth, The Beastie Boys, Boss Hog, and Buffalo Daughter; and has also done extensive work for companies such as X-girl, Marc Jacobs, and Supreme. He has had solo art shows at the Andrea Rosen Gallery (1996); Adam Bray Gallery in London (1997); The Alleged Gallery (1996, 2001, and 2004); The Collette Gallery (1998); and The Mu Museum in Holland (2004). His work was featured in the "Beautiful Losers" exhibitions at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati and at the Yerba Buena Center for Arts in San Francisco, as well as in Aaron Rose and Joshua Leonard's documentary feature *BEAUTIFUL LOSERS* (2008). A monograph of his work, *Mike Mills: Graphics Films*, was published by Damiani in 2009. Mr. Mills was born in Berkeley, California and graduated from Cooper Union.

BUCK

2011, USA

Director Cindy Meehl
Genre: Documentary

SYNOPSIS A living legend in the horse world, Buck Brannaman was the inspiration for THE HORSE WHISPERER. For this true cowboy, horses are a mirror of the human soul. Reared by an abusive father, Buck eschews violence. By teaching people to communicate with horses through instinct, not punishment, he frees the spirit of the horse and its human comrade. Buck promulgates grace in the bond between man and horse. The animal- human relationship becomes a perfect metaphor for meeting the challenges of daily life, whether they consist of raising kids, running a business, or finding your flow with a dance partner. What is extraordinary about Buck Brannaman, the man, leaps off the screen in this strikingly cinematic film by first-time director Cindy Meehl. Part guru, part psychologist--Buck, who was once a beaten kid, has now beaten the odds.

BIOGRAPHY Cindy Meehl founded Cedar Creek Productions, LLC in 2008. The film company has traveled from North Carolina, on to Tacoma Washington, France, Wyoming, California, Montana and Texas to film the legendary Buck Brannaman. His exceptional and profound horsemanship skills drove Cindy to create her first documentary. She thought it was a story that had to be told and an inspirational message that would benefit people whether they had a horse or not. Coming from a creative background in fashion and art, Cindy ran her own label Sasha, Cindy and Phil as well as Cindy Hughes Designs all through the eighties. She designed couture evening wear that sold across the country. Her clothes were in the window at Bergdorf Goodman and were featured in film and television as well as magazines and print campaigns. Cindy studied art at Marymount Manhattan College and the National Academy of Art in NYC. She began fine art painting in the 90's. She has now transferred her art from a canvas to a screen. Cindy is currently in development on a new documentary project. She lives in Connecticut with her husband, writer Brian Meehl, 2 daughters, 4 dogs and 2 horses.

ON THE ICE

2011, USA

Director Andrew Okpeaha MacLean
Genre: Narrative

SYNOPSIS In this engrossing and suspenseful feature film debut by filmmaker Andrew Okpeaha MacLean, two teenage boys who have grown up like brothers go about their lives in the comfortable claustrophobia of an isolated Alaskan town. Early one morning, on a seal hunt with another teenager, an argument between the three boys quickly escalates into a tragic accident. Bonded by their dark secret, the two best friends are forced to create one fabrication after another in order to survive. The shocked boys stumble through guilt-fueled days, avoiding the suspicions of their community as they weave a web of deceit. With their future in the balance, the two boys are forced to explore the limits of friendship and honor. It features breakout performances by Josiah Patkotak and Frank Qutuq Irelan.

BIOGRAPHY Andrew Okpeaha MacLean (Writer/Director) is an Iñupiaq filmmaker born and raised in Alaska. His short film SIKUMI premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival where it won the Jury Prize in Short Filmmaking and went on to many other awards at festivals around the world. Other films include NATCHILIAGNIAQTUGUK AAPAGALU (SEAL HUNTING WITH DAD) which had its premiere at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival, KINNAQ NIGAQTUQTUAQ (THE SNARING MADMAN) which won best short film at the 2006 American Indian Film Festival, SUCH A PERFECT DAY, and WHEN THE SEASON IS GOOD: ARTISTS OF ARCTIC ALASKA a full length documentary which was a featured screening in the 2007 Arctic Summer Series at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and was acquired for broadcast by ARTE, European Public Television. In 2008, he was named one of 25 New Faces of Independent Film by Filmmaker Magazine.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN

2010, USA

Director: Linda Goldstein Knowlton
Genre: Documentary

SYNOPSIS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN tells the intimate stories of four teenaged girls. They live in different parts of the US, in different kinds of families and are united by one thing: all four were adopted from China, because all four had birth parents who could not keep them, due to rural poverty and China's 'One Child Policy'. These strong young women allow us to grasp what it is like to come-of-age in today's America as trans-racial adoptees. At the same time, we see them as typical American teenagers doing what teenagers everywhere do, struggling to make sense of their lives. Through these young women, and their explorations of who they are, this film mirrors the American experience of defining individuality in a nation of immigrants. Identity, racism, and gender—these far-reaching issues are explored in the documentary. And with great honesty and courage, these four girls open their hearts to experience love, compassion, and self-acceptance.

BIOGRAPHY For her directorial debut, Linda Goldstein Knowlton co-directed and co-produced the feature-length documentary, THE WORLD ACCORDING TO SESAME STREET. The film looks at Sesame Street's international co-productions, made primarily in some of the world's political hotspots, including Kosovo, Bangladesh, and South Africa. The film made its World Premiere in competition at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival as an Official Selection in the U.S. Documentary category. The film was selected to screen at the Hot Docs Film Festival, as well as many other film festivals including Seattle, Boston, Dubrovnik, New Zealand, Melbourne, and Zurich. THE WORLD ACCORDING TO SESAME STREET had its US broadcast premiere in October, 2006 on PBS presented by Independent Lens. Previously, Goldstein Knowlton produced the New Zealand film WHALE RIDER, directed by Niki Caro, which was the winner of the Audience Awards at Toronto, Sundance, Rotterdam, Seattle, San Francisco and Maui film festivals. The film, released internationally in 2003 earned its star Keisha Castle-Hughes a nomination for Best Actress for an Oscar. Prior to that, she initiated the development of THE SHIPPING NEWS after reading the novel in galley-form in 1993 and then produced the 2001-released film, directed by Lasse Hallstrom. She made her feature-film producing debut in 1999 with both MUMFORD, written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan, and CRAZY IN ALABAMA, directed by Antonio Banderas.

In 2007, Goldstein Knowlton completed her one-year tenure as a Producer in Residence for the Sundance Institute, working with Michelle Satter in the Feature Film department; working with both the Writer and Director Labs, providing mentorship and resources for past Lab participants, and coordinating the Sundance/Sloan Grant and Lab Fellowship. Goldstein Knowlton is currently developing both fiction and documentary films. Born and raised in Chicago, Goldstein Knowlton studied Neuroscience at Brown University. Following college, she remained in Providence to serve the Governor of Rhode Island in the Office of Intergovernmental Relations. She subsequently worked raising funds for film preservation at The American Film Institute, first in Washington, D.C., and later in Los Angeles. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and daughter.

UNFINISHED SPACES

2011, USA

Directors: Alysa Nahmias and Ben Murray

Genre: Documentary

SYNOPSIS

"Cuba will count as having the most beautiful academy of arts in the world."

–Fidel Castro (1961)

Cuba's ambitious National Art Schools project, designed by three young artists in the wake of Castro's Revolution, is neglected, nearly forgotten, and then ultimately rediscovered as a visionary architectural masterpiece. In 1961, three young, visionary architects were commissioned by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara to create Cuba's National Art Schools on the grounds of a former golf course in Havana, Cuba. Construction of their radical designs began immediately and the school's first classes soon followed. Dancers, musicians and artists from all over the country reveled in the beauty of the schools, but as the dream of the Revolution quickly became a reality, construction was abruptly halted and the architects and their designs were deemed irrelevant in the prevailing political climate. Forty years later the schools are in use, but remain unfinished and decaying.

Castro has invited the exiled architects back to finish their unrealized dream. UNFINISHED SPACES features intimate footage of Fidel Castro, showing his devotion to creating a worldwide showcase for art, and it also documents the struggle and passion of three revolutionary artists whose inspiration and ideals could ultimately destroy them.

BIOGRAPHIES Alysa Nahmias is founder and executive director of Ajna Films. UNFINISHED SPACES is her feature directing debut. Her producing credits include THE LISTENING ARCHIVE and OUTSIDE THE GIARDINI. Nahmias has received numerous grants and awards from government agencies and private foundations, including the New York State Council on the Arts, the Jerome Foundation, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. She holds a Master's degree in architecture (M.Arch) from Princeton University and a B.A. from New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. Nahmias is a member of the American Institute of Architects, the International Documentary Association, the Independent Feature Project, and Women Make Movies.

Benjamin Murray started his post-production company, The Room, in 2010 and currently partners with Technicolor through two Flame Premium suites. His regular clients include major networks and numerous

independent production companies. Murray's recent projects include: NO DIRECTION HOME, directed by Martin Scorsese; CAPITALISM: A LOVE STORY, directed by Michael Moore; THE PROMISE: THE MAKING OF DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN, directed by Thom Zimny; CLIENT 9, directed by Alex Gibney; REAGAN, directed by Eugene Jarecki; FOG OF WAR, directed by Errol Morris; MY ARCHITECT, directed by Nathaniel Kahn; BORN INTO BROTHELS, directed by Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman; and ONCE IN A LIFETIME, directed by Paul Crowder. Murray holds a BFA in Film and Television Production from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.