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News

IFP Announces Narrative Lab Participants

by Peter Knegt (June 8, 2010)

IFP has announced the 10 projects selected for participation in this year's narrative edition of their Independent Filmmaker Labs. Presented by IFP, the labs make up a highly immersive free mentorship program for low-budget (under \$1,000,000) first feature films which have shot all or a substantial amount of footage for their features but have not completed post-production. The Narrative Lab is taking place June 7-11 in New York City.

Drawing from a national candidate pool, 20 projects (10 documentaries and 10 narratives) are selected for a year-long Lab fellowship. As previously announced, the expanded 2010 Labs include an initial five days of workshops that assist filmmakers with the technical, creative and strategic advice needed to complete their films; a Strategy & Networking Lab following in September with specialized workshops on web building, sales & marketing and audience building, as well as pre-scheduled meetings for the projects with potential buyers, funders and festival programmers during IFP's Independent Film Week; and a winter intensive Distribution Lab, specifically focused on hands-on creation and analysis of the necessary tools and initiatives for each films' festival launch, individualized distribution strategy, and web and marketing plans.

This week, the narrative filmmaking teams (three key members from each project) will participate in workshops in which they receive advice on creative and technical post-production issues. There are two tiers of mentorship support: the program's supervising Lab Leaders who lead each of the five-day-long intensive sessions, and workshop session leaders who provide mentorship and support to help bring these films to completion. The 2010 Narrative Lab leaders are producers Scott Macaulay ("Gummo," "Raising Victor Vargas") and Susan Stover ("High Art," "Laurel Canyon") and Jon Reiss, director and marketing & distribution specialist ("Think Outside the Box Office," "Bomb It!").

Individual workshop leaders include, amongst others: composer Nathan Larson ("The Kids Are All Right") and music supervisor Barry Cole ("Notorious," "Talk to Me"); editors Lee Percy ("Amelia," "Boys Don't Cry"), Tricia Cooke ("Solitary Man," "The Big Lebowski"), Brian Kates ("Jack Goes Boating," "The Savages"), Sabine Hoffmann ("The Private Lives of Pippa Lee," "Hounddog") and additional film professionals and strategists including Lisa Cortes (producer, "Precious: Based on the novel by Sapphire"), Mike Ryan (producer, "Choke"), Mynette Louie (producer, "Children of Invention"), Karin Chien (producer, "The Exploding Girl"), Marion Koltai-Levine (Zipline Entertainment), Brian Chirls (technologist, "Three Eyed Labs") and Todd Sklar (marketing specialist, Rangelife Entertainment).

In addition, each selected project director works with an independent producer who serves as a one-to-one mentor to establish goals, provide additional feedback, and share ideas to gain the most from the Lab program – and beyond. The 2010 Narrative Lab mentors are: Fred Berger ("Taking Chance"), Howard Gertler ("World's Greatest Dad"), Gill Holland ("True Adolescents"), Lars Kundsén & Jay VanHoy ("Old Joy"), Yael Melamede ("Brief Interviews With Hideous Men"), Gretchen McGowan ("The Limits of Control"), Michael Roiff ("Waitress"), Susan Stover ("High Art"), Frida Torresblanco ("Pan's Labyrinth"), and Sol Tryon ("Explicit Ills").

The Independent Filmmaker Labs also seek to ensure that at least 50% of the participating projects have an inclusive range of races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities and physical abilities in key creative positions.

"This year's Lab Fellows hail from all over the U.S., sharing original and highly sophisticated stories set in unfamiliar corners of the world, including the Gaza strip, post-genocide Rwanda, the backwoods of rural Georgia, the Minneapolis underground and the melting pot of New York City," said Amy Dotson, IFP's Deputy Director, in a statement. "The purpose of the Labs is to introduce and support talent 'under-the-radar' new talents – those who have little previous industry exposure and live outside the film hubs of New York and LA – providing them with the access, mentorship and tools necessary to ensure that their unique stories reach audiences."

The selected projects for the 2010 Narrative Lab and Lab Fellows include (with descriptions provided by the festival):

Habibi Rasak Kharban (Darling, Something's Wrong with Your Head)

Habibi tells the story of forbidden love in Gaza. The first feature regarding Gaza to be made in over 15 years,



A scene from Lucy Mulloy's "Una Noche." [Image courtesy of IFP]

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the film is a modern retelling of the ancient romance Majnun Layla. Habibi serves as a catalyst for understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as an illumination of the multi-textured character of Gaza. Fellows: Susan Youssef (Director, Writer, Producer, Editor), Man Kit Lam (Editor)
Cast: Kais Nashef ("Paradise Now," "Body of Lies")

I'm Not Me

As Josh struggles with the death of his wife Sam, his grief begins to manifest itself in strange ways. When Josh meets his dead wife - who is somehow alive and well - he investigates further only to realize that he is shifting between realities. Opportunity turns into tragedy as Josh tries to regain the life he once had. Fellows: Rodrigo Lopresti, Zak Mulligan (Director, Writer, Producer, Editors)

Kinyarwanda

During the Rwandan genocide, the most respected Muslim leader in the country issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims from participating in the killing. As the country became a slaughterhouse, mosques became places of refuge where Muslims and Christians, Hutus and Tutsis came together to protect each other. Kinyarwanda interweaves six different tales that provides the most complex and real depiction yet presented of human resilience and life during the genocide. With an amalgamation of characters, the filmmaker pays homage to many, using the voices of a few. Fellows: Alrick Brown (Director, Writer), Darren Dean (Producer), Tovah Leibowitz (Editor)

Melvin

Melvin is a slow-burn road movie and the fractured portrait of Melvin Mills, a wandering misfit struggling to express himself. Fellows: Chris Ohlson (Director, Writer, Producer), Gregory Collins (Writer)

Pariah

A Brooklyn teenager juggles conflicting identities and risks friendship, family, and heartbreak in a desperate search for sexual expression. Fellows: Dee Rees (Director, Writer), Nekisa Cooper (Producer), Mako Kamitsuna (Editor) Cast: Kim Wayans ("In Living Color")

Restless City

You are a young, vibrant West African immigrant. There is music in your blood and fearlessness in your heart. The streets of New York are your home, where you can do anything you want. What you gonna do?... Hustle. Fellows: Andrew Dosunmu (Director), Katie Mustard (Producer), Oriana Soddu (Editor) Cast: Danai Gurira ("The Visitor," "Wes Craven's My Soul To Take")

Sahkanaga

Paul, a teenager in rural Georgia, throws out his sister's kitten. When he's forced to search for the cat, he stumbles upon a gruesome discovery in the woods. If he tells the truth, he risks exposing his parents who run the local funeral home, and losing Lyla, a beautiful outsider spending the summer in Sahkanaga. But if he keeps the secret, he risks destroying much more. Fellows: John Henry Summerour (Director, Writer, Producer), Tara Anderson (Executive Producer), Miky Wolf (Editor)

Stuck Between Stations

Casper, a soldier who experienced the horrors of war, fell in love with Rebecca, a once-promising grad student who just killed her career. Although they have known each other since elementary school, the two soon reconnect. They spend a night in the underbelly of Minneapolis talk through their hopes and dreams, and maybe becoming closer to one another. Fellows: Brady Kiernan (Director, Producer), Todd Cobery (Producer), Spencer Kiernan (Producer) Cast: Zoe Lister-Jones ("Breaking Upwards"), Sam Rosen ("Four Boxes"), Michael Imperioli ("The Sopranos," "Lovely Bones") and Josh Hartnett ("Black Hawk Down")

Una Noche

Raul is forced to flee Havana. He wants his best friend, Elio, to leave everything behind and come with him. Together they plan to take the treacherous journey across the ocean to Miami. Raul is in search of his father and Elio has to make the choice whether to go or stay and support his sister. Upon this night, full of hope and fraught with tensions, they face the biggest challenge of their lives. Fellows: Lucy Mulloy (Director, Writer, Producer), Daniel Mulloy (Producer)

Yelling To The Sky

Growing up in a depraved neighborhood in Queens, Sweetness O'Hara has so far managed to avoid the pitfalls of New York urban life. Soon enough, events converge that change her course: at the abusive hands of her father, her mother suffers a nervous breakdown and her beloved sister moves out. Alone and devastated, she takes control of her life. Fellows: Victoria Mahoney (Director, Writer, Producer), Billy Mulligan (Producer) Cast: Zoe Kravitz ("Twelve," "Assassination of a High School President"), Gabourey Sibide ("Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire"), Tim Blake Nelson ("O Brother, Where Art Thou?"), Shareeka Epps ("Half Nelson"), Jason Clark ("Public Enemies")

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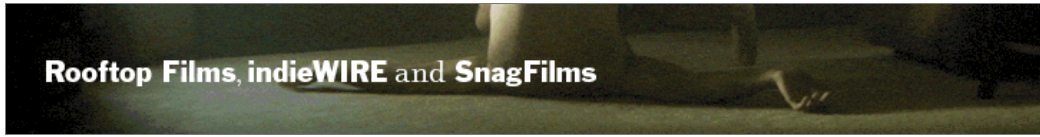
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