FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Contact: Melanie Bates, Film Independent
Tel: 323.556.9338 or mbates@filmindependent.org

Seanna Hore, Ginsberg/Libby
Tel: 323.645.6800 or seanna.hore@ginsberglibby.com

FILM INDEPENDENT SELECTS 30 FILMMAKERS FOR PROJECT INVOLVE 2020

LOS ANGELES (March 17, 2020) — Film Independent, the nonprofit arts organization that produces the Spirit Awards, has selected 30 filmmakers for Project Involve 2020. Project Involve is a free nine-month program for writers, directors, producers, editors, cinematographers and entertainment executives from diverse backgrounds. During the program, participants meet one-on-one with film industry mentors, create short films, attend master-workshops taught by top film professionals and industry networking events. Now in its 27th year, the Project Involve program fosters the careers of talented filmmakers from communities traditionally underrepresented in the film industry including Lulu Wang (The Farewell), Linda Yvette Chávez, Marvin Lemus and Aaliyah Williams (Gentefied), Effie T. Brown (Dear White People), Jon M. Chu (In the Heights) and Justin Simien (Dear White People).

“Film Independent is thrilled to welcome the 2020 Project Involve Fellows, who join the ranks of such prestigious alumni as Lulu Wang (The Farewell), Linda Yvette Chávez, Marvin Lemus and Aaliyah Williams (Gentefied),” said Francisco Velasquez, Senior Manager of Project Involve. “We look forward to shining a light on their unique stories that are so needed. As always, we are extremely grateful to all of our supporters who are an integral part of making change.”

Past shorts produced in the program include Liberty (2019 SXSW Narrative Short Film Jury Award, 2019 Special Prize of the Generation 14plus International Jury for the Best Short Film at the Berlin International Film Festival, 2019 AFI Special Jury Prize – Live Action) and Emergency (2018 Sundance Special Jury Award, 2018 SXSW Narrative Short Film Jury Award).
Past Project Involve Mentors include: Janicza Bravo (*Lemon, Zola*); Ava DuVernay (*Selma, When They See Us*); Catherine Hardwicke (*Twilight*); Alma Har’el (*Honey Boy*); Barry Jenkins (*If Beale Street Could Talk, Moonlight*); Mako Kamitsuna (*Pariah, Mudbound*); Spike Jonze (*Adaptation, Being John Malkovich*); Charles D. King (*Fences, Mudbound*); Christopher Nolan (*The Dark Knight, Memento*); Alexander Payne (*Sideways, The Descendants*); Christine Vachon (*Carol, Boys Don’t Cry*); Forest Whitaker (*Arrival, The Last King of Scotland*) and Bradford Young, ASC (*A Most Violent Year, Selma*).

Film Independent also announced continued support of the program through donor-named fellowships. The Easterseals Disability Services Fellowship is presented to a Project Involve filmmaker who identifies as a person with a disability. This year’s Easterseals Disability Services Fellow is Andrew Reid. The Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television Fellowship (LMU SFTV) is presented to one of the school’s alumni. This year’s LMU SFTV Fellow is Tabatha Laanui. The donor-named fellowships for the 2020 Project Involve program to be awarded at a later date are: Amazon Studios Film Fellowship, which will be presented to a visionary filmmaker; the Participant Fellowship; and the ninth annual Sony Pictures Entertainment Fellowship. Each Fellowship provides essential program support to Project Involve and includes a $10,000 unrestricted cash grant for a selected filmmaker participating in the program. In addition, for the second year, the Panavision Fellowship will provide an outstanding cinematographer in the program with a camera rental package valued at $60,000 for use on a future project produced in the US. This year’s Panavision Fellow is Allen E. Ho.

This year’s Project Involve Fellows by track are:

**CINEMATOGRAPHERS**
Vittoria Campaner  
Becky Baihui Chen  
Allen E. Ho  
Frances Kroon  
Andrew Truong

**DIRECTORS**
Ruth Du  
Cris Gris  
Andrew Reid  
Diante Singley  
Andrew Vasquez

**EDITORS**
Amber Bansak  
Nailah Robinson  
Marco Rosas
Katelyn Wright 
Bowei Yue 

EXECUTIVES 
Olutoye Adegboro 
Jennifer Gottesfeld 
Greta Hagen-Richardson 

PRODUCERS 
Brian Grigsby 
Takara Joseph 
Tabatha Laanui 
Lauren López de Victoria 
Sabrina Stoll 
Brandon Tarver 

WRITERS 
Mary Ann Anane 
Agam Darshi 
Jeanette Lim 
Jesenia Ruiz 
Karan Sunil 

WRITER/DIRECTORS 
Gauri Adelkar 

Film Independent Artist Development programs promote unique independent voices by helping filmmakers create and advance new work through Project Involve; Filmmaker Labs (Directing, Documentary, Episodic, Producing and Screenwriting); Fast Track finance market and Fiscal Sponsorship, as well as through Grants and Awards that provide over one million dollars annually to visual storytellers. 

Film Independent's Project Involve is made possible by Principal Sponsors the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, EFILM I Deluxe, The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television, National Endowment for the Arts and Panavision. The program is also supported by Amazon Studios, Cast & Crew, Easterseals Disability Services, Formosa Group, Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, Participant, SAGindie, Sony Pictures Entertainment and The Camera Division. Additional support provided by Endcrawl and Final Draft.
ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT
For over 38 years, Film Independent has helped filmmakers get their projects made and seen. The nonprofit’s mission is to champion creative independence in visual storytelling and support a community of artists who embody diversity, innovation and uniqueness of vision.

In addition to producing the Film Independent Spirit Awards, the organization supports creative professionals with Artist Development programs, grants and labs, and signature mentorship program Project Involve fosters the careers of talented filmmakers from underrepresented communities. Weekly Education events and workshops equip filmmakers of all ages and experience levels with tools and resources. International programs include Global Media Makers, a cultural exchange program that provides career-building opportunities for international film professionals. Film Independent Presents is a year-round program offering screenings, conversations and other unique cinematic experiences to Members in Los Angeles and beyond.

While working to make the entertainment industry more inclusive, Film Independent provides access to a network of like-minded artists. Film lovers, industry professionals and anyone passionate about visual storytelling can become a Member at filmindependent.org and connect with @FilmIndependent across social platforms.

###