FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Contact: Seanna Hore, Ginsberg/Libby
Seanna.Hore@ginsberglibby.com
Gladys Santos, Ginsberg/Libby
Gladys.Santos@ginsberglibby.com

FILM INDEPENDENT SELECTS 15 PROJECTS FOR THE 19th FAST TRACK FILM FINANCE MARKET

$20,000 in grants awarded by Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

LOS ANGELES (November 19, 2021) – Film Independent announced today that 36 filmmakers and 15 projects were selected for the 19th Fast Track Film Finance Market that took place online November 15 – 18, 2021. The program is an intensive, four-day film-financing market in which participants are connected with established financiers, production companies, agents, managers and other film industry professionals who can move their current projects forward.

“Storytelling knows no boundaries, and our support of a global group of filmmakers and stories reflects not only the universality of the human condition, but the tangible importance of fostering connections between filmmakers and industry from international markets to help these projects reach audiences everywhere,” said Lisa Hasko, Director of Artist Development.

Recent Fast Track projects completed include Bing Liu’s 2019 Oscar-nominated documentary Minding the Gap; Hikari’s 2019 Berlinale jury prize and audience award-winning debut 37 Seconds; Kirill Mikhanovsky’s Give Me Liberty which premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival and Directors’ Fortnight at Cannes; Christina Choe’s 2018 Sundance Jury prize-winning fiction feature Nancy; Nijla Mumin’s 2018 SXSW jury prize-winning fiction feature JINN; Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown’s 2018 Tribeca Film...
Festival Audience Award-winning documentary *United Skates* and Lana Wilson’s 2018 Spirit Award-nominated documentary *The Departure*. Additional projects supported through Fast Track include Chloë Zhao’s Spirit Award-nominated debut *Songs My Brothers Taught Me*, David Osit and Malika Zouhali-Worrall’s Emmy award-winning documentary *Thank You for Playing*, Robbie Pickering’s Spirit Award-nominated *Natural Selection*; and Courtney Hunt’s Academy Award and Spirit Award-nominated *Frozen River*.


The Sloan Fast Track Grant, a $20,000 grant to support the production of a project that explores science and technology themes or characters in engaging and innovative ways, is awarded to *Moving Bangladesh* written and directed by Nuhash Humayun and produced by Arifur Rahman and Bijon Imtiaz. “It’s an honour,” says Nuhash Humayun. “Our film tells the true story behind Pathao, a motorcycle based ridesharing app that has changed the face of travel in the developing world. A heartfelt underdog story about a startup that goes from Dhaka’s alleys to Silicon Valley, the film captures how solving a local problem can become a global phenomenon.”

The following filmmakers and their projects were selected to participate in Film Independent’s 2021 Fast Track program:

**FICTION TRACK:**

**Title: Alien Kulture**  
Writer/Director: Iesh Thapar  
Producer: Sarah Seulki Oh  
Logline: A British Indian youngster growing up during Margaret Thatcher’s racially divided Britain, battles the conservative trappings of society and his insular-minded older brother, in order to pursue his musical dreams and unlikely punk-rock ambitions.
Title: Angel in Retrograde  
Writer/Director: Miguel Angel Caballero  
Producer: Ornella Jaramillo  
Logline: After being diagnosed with retrograde amnesia, Angel, a husband, and father, struggles to remember who he is. As memories and repressed feelings return, he realizes he’s been living his entire life in the closet, leading to an encounter with Joshua, an estranged high school friend he was once in love with.

Title: The Cow of Queens  
Writer/Director: Kate Marks  
Producers: Krista Parris, Neda Armian  
Logline: A dying dad (think Don Quixote) and his trusty daughter go on one last wild adventure to save a runaway cow from the Butcher, chasing it through the streets of Queens.

Title: Mama D’Lo  
Writer/Director: Lauren Marsden  
Producer: Robert Maylor  
Logline: Deep in the Trinidadian jungle, a river is being choked to death by developers, and an old curse must be released in order to stop them.

Title: The Mesopotamian  
Writer/Director: Esra Saydam  
Producer: Gerry Kim, Alvaro R. Valente  
Logline: Under the moons of Ramadan, a Muslim EMT works the chaotic fringes of NYC with her veteran partner. A chance encounter will spark an affair that will upend her world.

Title: Moving Bangladesh  
Writer/Director: Nuhash Humayun  
Producers: Arifur Rahman, Bijon Imtiaz  
Logline: Sick of being stuck in traffic – and in life – a struggling middle-class Bangladeshi entrepreneur creates a motorcycle-based ridesharing app that may change transport in developing cities, such as Dhaka, forever but must first overcome his family’s skepticism and a hostile political environment.

Title: Our Last Summer  
Writer/Co-Director: Gary Jaffe  
Co-Director: Katie Ennis  
Producer: Emily McCann Lesser  

Title: The Plutonians  
Writer/Director: Tim Delaney
Producer: Shao Min Chew Chia
Logline: When the redefinition of “planet” threatens to demote Pluto, an insecure Pluto expert dives into a chaotic astronomy conference to save it, fearing irrelevancy without Pluto’s reputation validating his work.

**Title: Wild Animal**
Writer/Director: Joseph Marconi
Producer: Lysette Urus
Logline: A young, transient MMA fighter is forced to choose between court-ordered Equine Therapy and the familiar path of self-destruction, after a traumatic brain injury threatens her promising career.

**Title: Zagorohorror**
Writer/Director: Cat Papadimitriou
Producer: Meaghan “Wilbs” Wilbur
Logline: Eva thinks her cousin Georgia's views on motherhood are regressive. Georgia thinks Eva's feminism is playing with fire. Their grandmother's remote mountain village in Greece thinks they're both ripe for the picking.

**DOCUMENTARY TRACK:**

**Title: Dusty & Stones**
Director: Jesse Rudoy
Producer: Melissa Adeyemo
Logline: Two struggling country music singers from the tiny African Kingdom of Swaziland journey to Texas determined to win big at a battle of the bands and turn their careers around.

**Title: Joybubbles**
Director/Producer: Rachael Morrison
Producer: Sarah Winshall
Logline: *Joybubbles* tells the amazing story of Joe Engressia (aka Joybubbles), a blind genius who discovered he could hack into the analogue telephone system by whistling a magic tone.

**Title: Nurse Unseen**
Director: Michele Josue
Producers: Carlo Velayo, Jhett Tolentino
Logline: *Nurse Unseen* explores the little-known history and humanity of the unsung Filipino nurses risking their lives on the frontlines of a pandemic, thousands of miles from home.

**Title: Philly on Fire**
Director: Ross Rockow
Producers: Shannon Kring, Tommy Walker
Logline: Told by those who lived it, *Philly on Fire* is the unknown story of May 13, 1985, when Philadelphia—the Birthplace of America and the City of Brotherly Love—became the City that Bombed Itself.

**Title: Untitled Sam and Omar Project**
**Director:** Nadav Kurtz  
**Producer:** Diane Quon

Logline: Omar Bader was only eight years old when his father Sam, a film producer, was sentenced to 24 years in prison. Now twenty-three, and struggling under the weight of his father’s long absence, Sam attempts to help Omar summon the courage to pursue his artistic dreams through a creative collaboration.

**ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT**

Film Independent is the nonprofit arts organization that champions creative independence in visual storytelling and supports a community of artists who embody diversity, innovation and uniqueness of vision. Film Independent helps filmmakers make their movies, builds an audience for their projects and works to diversify the film industry. Film Independent’s Board of Directors, filmmakers, staff and constituents is comprised of an inclusive community of individuals across ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation. Anyone passionate about film can become a Member, whether you are a filmmaker, industry professional or a film lover.

In addition to producing the Spirit Awards, Film Independent produces Film Independent Presents, a year-round screening series for its members that offers unique cinematic experiences for the Los Angeles creative community and the general public.

Through annual screenings and events, Film Independent provides access to a network of like-minded artists who are driving creativity in the film industry. Film Independent’s Artist Development program offers free labs for selected writers, directors, producers and documentary filmmakers and presents year-round networking opportunities. Project Involve is Film Independent’s signature program dedicated to fostering the careers of talented filmmakers from communities traditionally underrepresented in the film industry.

For more information or to become a Member, visit [filmindependent.org](http://filmindependent.org).

**ABOUT THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION**

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation is a New York based, philanthropic, not-for-profit institution that makes grants in three areas: research in science, technology, and economics; quality and diversity of scientific institutions; and public engagement with science. Sloan’s program in Public Understanding of Science and Technology, directed by Doron Weber, supports books, radio, film, television, theater, and new media to reach a wide, non-specialized audience and to bridge the two cultures of science and the humanities.
Sloan’s Film Program encourages filmmakers to create more realistic and compelling stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists and engineers in the popular imagination. Over the past two decades, Sloan has partnered with top film schools in the country – including AFI, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, NYU, UCLA, and USC plus six public film schools – and established annual awards in screenwriting and film production, along with an annual best-of-the-best Student Grand Jury Prize. The Foundation also supports screenplay development programs with the Sundance Institute, Tribeca Film Institute, SFFILM, the Black List, the Athena Film Festival, the North Fork TV Festival, and Film Independent’s Producing Lab and Fast Track programs, and has helped develop over 25 feature films including: Michael Almereyda’s *Tesla*, Lydia Dean Pilcher and Ginny Mohler’s *Radium Girls*, Thor Klein’s *Adventures of a Mathematician*, Jessica Oreck’s *One Man Dies a Million Times*, Michael Tyburski’s *The Sound of Silence*, Shawn Snyder’s *To Dust*, Logan Kibens and Sharon Greene’s *Operator*, Morten Tyldum’s *The Imitation Game* and Matthew Brown’s *The Man Who Knew Infinity*. The Foundation has supported feature documentaries such as *Father of the Cyborgs*, *Picture a Scientist*, *Coded Bias*, *In Silico*, *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life*, *The Bit Player*, *Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story*, *Particle Fever*, and Jacque Perrin’s *Oceans*. The Foundation’s book program includes support for Margot Lee Shetterly’s *Hidden Figures*, which became the highest-grossing Oscar-nominated film of 2017, and a social and cultural milestone.

For more information about the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, please visit [www.sloan.org](http://www.sloan.org) or follow the Foundation at @SloanPublic on Twitter and Facebook.

###