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2015 FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED
Ceremony aired live exclusively on IFC at 2:00 pm PT / 5:00 pm ET
Rebroadcast later this evening on IFC

LOS ANGELES (February 21, 2015) – Film Independent, the nonprofit arts organization that produces the Spirit Awards, Los Angeles Film Festival and Film Independent at LACMA, handed out top honors to *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)*, *Boyhood*, *Whiplash* and *Nightcrawler* at this afternoon's 30th Film Independent Spirit Awards. *Still Alice*, *Dear White People*, *Ida*, *Land Ho!* and *CITIZENFOUR* also received awards at the ceremony, which was held in a tent on the beach in Santa Monica. *Inherent Vice* received the Robert Altman Award and *Foxcatcher* received a Special Distinction Award. In addition to being the celebration that honors artist-driven films made with an economy of means by filmmakers whose films embody independence and originality, the Spirit Awards is the primary fundraiser for Film Independent's year-round programs. The ceremony aired live today on IFC and a rebroadcast will air later this evening, please check your local listings for times. Clips from the ceremony are available on [Yahoo](#) and Film Independent's YouTube [channel](#) after the show.

Over the past 30 years, the Film Independent Spirit Awards has made a name for itself as the premiere awards show for the independent film community. Artists who have received industry recognition first at the Spirit Awards include Joel and Ethan Coen, Spike Lee, Oliver Stone, Ashley Judd, Robert Rodriguez, David O. Russell, Edward Burns, Aaron Eckhart, Neil LaBute, Darren Aronofsky, Spike Jonze, Charlie Kaufman, Hilary Swank, Marc Forster, Todd Field, Christopher Nolan, Zach Braff, Amy Adams, Lena Dunham and many more.

This year's major category winners were *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)*; which won Best Feature, Best Male Lead and Best Cinematography, *Boyhood*; which won Best Director and Best Supporting Female, *Nightcrawler*; which won Best First Feature and Best Screenplay and *Whiplash*; which won Best Supporting Male and Best Editing; *Still Alice*, which won Best Female Lead; *Dear White People*, which won Best First Screenplay; *Land Ho!*, which won the John Cassavetes Award; *Ida*, which won Best International Film and *CITIZENFOUR*, which won Best Documentary.

The 8th annual Robert Altman Award was given to one film's director, casting director and ensemble cast. Paul Thomas Anderson's *Inherent Vice* received this award, along with casting director Cassandra Kulukundis and ensemble cast members Josh Brolin, Hong Chau, Martin Donovan, Jena Malone, Joanna Newsom, Joaquin Phoenix, Sasha Pieterse, Eric Roberts, Maya Rudolph, Martin Short, Serena Scott Thomas, Benicio del Toro, Katherine Waterston, Owen Wilson, Reese Witherspoon and Michael Kenneth Williams.

The Special Distinction Award, given to a film for its uniqueness of vision, honesty of direction and screenwriting, superb acting and overall filmmaking achievement, was given to *Foxcatcher*. The award was given to director/producer Bennett Miller, producers Anthony Bregman, Megan Ellison, Jon Kilik, writers E. Max Frye, Dan Futterman, actors Steve Carell, Mark Ruffalo, Channing Tatum.

The 2015 Roger and Chaz Ebert Foundation Fellowship which includes a cash grant of \$10,000 was awarded to Christina Choe. This annual award is given to a filmmaker currently participating in a Film Independent Artist Development program with the mission of diversity in mind. Choe, a participant in the 2015 Directing Lab, is currently in active pre-production on her first narrative feature film, *Nancy*.

The Film Independent Spirit Awards are sponsored by Premier Sponsors Piaget, The Lincoln Motor Company, Bank of America, Heineken, American Airlines and IFC. T-Mobile® is the Official Arrivals Show Sponsor, Sauza 901 Tequila is the Official Spirit and FIJI Water is the Official Water of the 2015 Spirit Awards. WireImage is the Official Photographer of Film Independent.

The production team for this year's Spirit Awards includes executive producer and director Joel Gallen, producers Shawn Davis and Rick Austin.

The following is a complete list of the winners:

Best Feature: *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (Fox Searchlight Pictures)

Producers: Alejandro G. Iñárritu, John Lesher, Arnon Milchan, James W. Skotchdopole

Best Director: Richard Linklater (IFC Films)

Best Screenplay: Dan Gilroy, *Nightcrawler* (Open Road Films)

Best First Feature: *Nightcrawler* (Open Road Films)

Director: Dan Gilroy, Producers: Jennifer Fox, Tony Gilroy, Jake Gyllenhaal, David Lancaster, Michel Litvak

Best First Screenplay: Justin Simien, *Dear White People* (Roadside Attractions/Lionsgate)

John Cassavetes Award (For best feature made under \$500,000): *Land Ho!* (Sony Pictures Classics)

Writers/Directors: Aaron Katz, Martha Stephens, Producers: Christina Jennings, Mynette Louie, Sara Murphy

Best Supporting Female: Patricia Arquette, *Boyhood* (IFC Films)

Best Supporting Male: J.K. Simmons, *Whiplash* (Sony Pictures Classics)

Best Female Lead: Julianne Moore, *Still Alice* (Sony Pictures Classics)

Best Male Lead: Michael Keaton, *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (Fox Searchlight Pictures)

Robert Altman Award: *Inherent Vice* (Warner Bros.)

Director: Paul Thomas Anderson, Casting Director: Cassandra Kulukundis, Ensemble Cast: Josh Brolin, Hong Chau, Martin Donovan, Jena Malone, Joanna Newsom, Joaquin Phoenix, Sasha Pieterse, Eric Roberts, Maya Rudolph, Martin Short, Serena Scott Thomas, Benicio del Toro, Katherine Waterston, Owen Wilson, Reese Witherspoon, Michael Kenneth Williams.

Best Cinematography: Emmanuel Lubezki, *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (Fox Searchlight Pictures)

Best Editing: Tom Cross, *Whiplash* (Sony Pictures Classics)

Best International Film: *Ida* (Poland – Music Box Films)

Director: Pawel Pawlikowski

Best Documentary: *CITIZENFOUR* (RADIUS-TWC / HBO Documentary Films / Participant Media)

Director: Laura Poitras; Producers: Mathilde Bonnefoy, Dirk Wilutzky

Special Distinction Award: *Foxcatcher* (Sony Pictures Classics)

Director/Producer: Bennett Miller, Producers: Anthony Bregman, Megan Ellison, Jon Kilik, Writers: E. Max Frye, Dan Futterman, Actors: Steve Carell, Mark Ruffalo, Channing Tatum

2015 FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARD WINNERS BY DISTRIBUTOR

5 Sony Pictures Classics

3 Fox Searchlight Pictures

2 IFC Films

2 Open Road Films

1 Roadside Attractions/ Lionsgate

1 Music Box Films

1 RADIUS-TWC / HBO Documentary Films / Participant Media

1 Warner Bros.

On January 10 the following winners were honored at the Spirit Awards Filmmaker Grant and Nominee Brunch at BOA Steakhouse in West Hollywood: Chris Ohlson received the Piaget Producers Award. The award honors emerging producers who, despite highly limited resources, demonstrate the creativity, tenacity, and vision required to produce quality independent films. The annual award, in its 18th year, includes a \$25,000 unrestricted grant funded by Piaget for the 8th year. Finalists were Chad Burris and Elisabeth Holm.

Dan Krauss, director of *The Kill Team*, received the LensCrafters Truer Than Fiction Award. The award is presented to an emerging director of non-fiction features who has not received significant recognition. The award is in its 20th year and includes a \$25,000 unrestricted grant funded by LensCrafters. Finalists for the award were Sara Dosa for *The Last Season*, Darius Clark Monroe for *Evolution of a Criminal* and Amanda Rose Wilder for *Approaching the Elephant*.

Rania Attieh and Daniel Garcia, directors of *H.*, received the Kiehl's Someone to Watch Award. The award recognizes talented filmmakers of singular vision who have not yet received appropriate recognition. The award is in its 21st year and includes a \$25,000 unrestricted grant funded by Kiehl's Since 1851. Finalists for the award were Ana Lily Amirpour for *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* and Chris Eska for *The Retrieval*.

ATTENDEES:

Joining Josh Welsh, President of Film Independent, were hosts Fred Armisen and Kristen Bell and Honorary Chair Kerry Washington.

Presenters included:

Cate Blanchett, Jessica Chastain, Ellar Coltrane, Mark Duplass, Carmen Ejogo, Zach Galifianakis, Ethan Hawke, Gillian Jacobs, Scarlett Johansson, Jared Leto, Diego Luna, Ewan McGregor, Alfred Molina, Julianne Moore, Olivia Munn, David Oyelowo, Alexander Payne, Michael Pena, Aubrey Plaza, Craig Robinson, Emmy Rossum, Andy Samberg, Dax Shepard, J.K. Simmons, Jenny Slate, Emma Stone, Miles Teller, Marisa Tomei, Kerry Washington, Kristen Wiig, and Oprah Winfrey.

Nominees, special award recipients and celebrities expected to attend include:

Riz Ahmed, Paul Thomas Anderson, Fred Armisen, Patricia Arquette, Kristen Bell, Andre Benjamin, Jason Blum, Effie T. Brown, Jessica Chastain, Damien Chazelle, Marion Cotillard, Ava DuVernay, Carmen Ejogo, Dan Gilroy, Ethan Hawke, Alejandro G. Iñárritu, Michael Keaton, Rinko Kikuchi, Richard Linklater, Jena Malone, Alfred Molina, Julianne Moore, David Oyelowo, Andrea Suarez Paz, Joaquin Phoenix, Eric Roberts, Maya Rudolph, Justin Simien, J.K. Simmons, Jenny Slate, Emma Stone, Serena Scott Thomas, Benicio Del Toro, Kerry Washington, Josh Welsh, Oprah Winfrey, Adam Wingard and David Zellner.

ABOUT THE FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS

Now in its 30th year, the Film Independent Spirit Awards is an annual celebration that honors artist-driven films made with an economy of means by filmmakers whose films embody independence and originality. The Spirit Awards recognizes the achievements of American and international independent filmmakers and promotes the finest independent films of the year to a wider audience. The winners of the Spirit Awards are voted upon by Film Independent and IFP Members. Awards are given in the following categories: Best Feature, Best First Feature, Best First Screenplay, Best Director, Best Screenplay, John Cassavetes Award (given to the best feature made for a budget under \$500,000), Best Male Lead, Best Female Lead, Best Supporting Male, Best Supporting Female, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, the Robert Altman Award, Best International Film and Best Documentary. The Filmmaker Grants include the Piaget Producers Award, the Kiehl's Someone to Watch Award and the LensCrafters Truer Than Fiction Award. The Film Independent Spirit Awards are sponsored by Premier Sponsors Piaget, The Lincoln Motor Company, Bank of America, Heineken, American Airlines and IFC. T-Mobile® is the Official Arrivals Show Sponsor, Sauza 901 Tequila is the Official Spirit and FIJI Water is the Official Water of the 2015 Spirit Awards. WireImage is the Official Photographer of Film Independent.

ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT

Film Independent is a nonprofit arts organization that champions independent film 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.

Film Independent produces the Spirit Awards, the annual celebration honoring artist-driven films and recognizing the finest achievements of American independent filmmakers, as well as the Los Angeles Film Festival, celebrating its 20th anniversary of showcasing the best of American and international cinema. Film Independent also produces the Film Independent at LACMA Film Series, a year-round, weekly program that offers unique cinematic experiences for the Los Angeles creative community and the general public.

With over 250 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.

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