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2018 FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS
FILMMAKER GRANT WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Spirit Awards Winners To Be Revealed on Saturday, March 3
Broadcast Live on IFC at 2:00 pm PT / 5:00 pm ET

LOS ANGELES (January 6, 2018) - Film Independent, the nonprofit arts organization that produces the Spirit Awards and the LA Film Festival, announced the winners of its five Spirit Awards filmmaker grants today at its annual Spirit Awards Nominee Brunch held at BOA Steakhouse in West Hollywood. John Cho (Star Trek, Columbus, Search) and Alia Shawkat (Search Party, Blaze, Duck Butter) co-hosted the event and handed out the honors.

"This year we are giving out $150,000 in cash grants to a group of remarkably talented writers, directors, and producers," said Film Independent President Josh Welsh. "The Spirit Awards grants are designed to provide critical support to these filmmakers, recognizing them for past accomplishments and helping them to develop new work."

Chloé Zhao received the inaugural Bonnie Award. Bonnie Tiburzi Caputo joined American Airlines in 1973 at age 24, becoming the first female pilot to fly for a major U.S. airline. In her honor, the Bonnie Award recognizes a mid-career female director with a $50,000 unrestricted grant sponsored by American Airlines. Finalists for the award were So Yong Kim and Lynn Shelton.
Jonathan Olshefski, director of *Quest*, received the Jeep® 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 23rd year and includes a $25,000 unrestricted grant funded by the Jeep brand for the first year. Finalists for the award were Shevaun Mizrahi, director of *Distant Constellation* and Jeff Unay, director of *The Cage Fighter*.

Justin Chon, director of *Gook*, 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 24th year and includes a $25,000 unrestricted grant funded by Kiehl’s Since 1851 for the fourth consecutive year. Finalists for the award were Amman Abbasi, director of *Dayveon* and Kevin Phillips, director of *Super Dark Times*.

Summer Shelton 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 21st year, includes a $25,000 unrestricted grant funded by Piaget for the 11th year. Finalists for the award were Giulia Caruso & Ki Jin Kim and Ben Leclair.

Matty Brown received the Seattle Story Award. The award is for a filmmaker who exhibits innovation, diversity and uniqueness of vision while having a history of transforming perspectives through rich stories. The award includes a $25,000 cash grant, sponsored by Visit Seattle, to create a short film inspired by Seattle’s independent spirit. This film will premiere during the Spirit Awards broadcast.

This year marks the 33rd edition of the awards show that celebrates the best of independent film. Nick Kroll and John Mulaney return to co-host the show, and director Ava DuVernay is the Spirit Awards Honorary Chair. Winners for the remaining categories will be revealed at the 2018 Film Independent Spirit Awards on Saturday, March 3. The awards ceremony will be broadcast live exclusively on IFC at 2:00 pm PT / 5:00 pm ET.

In addition to celebrating the broad spectrum of independent filmmaking, the Spirit Awards is also the primary fundraiser for Film Independent’s year-round programs, which cultivate the careers of emerging filmmakers and promote diversity in the industry. To learn more about donations, table sales and attendance, please contact jmurby@filmindependent.org or 310.432.1253.

To download the Film Independent Spirit Awards logo, [click here](#)

[Click here](#) to see the list of this year’s nominees.
ABOUT THE FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS
Now in its 33rd year, the Film Independent Spirit Awards is an annual celebration honoring 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 independent filmmakers and promotes the finest independent films of the year to a wider audience.

The Film Independent Spirit Awards are sponsored by Premier Sponsors American Airlines, AT&T, IFC and the Jeep brand; Principal Sponsors Piaget and Visit Seattle; and Supporting Sponsor Truly Spiked & Sparkling. FIJI Water is the Official Water. Landmark Vineyards is the Official Wine. WireImage is the Official Photographer.

ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT
Film Independent is a nonprofit arts organization that champions independent 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 the LA Film Festival and 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.

About IFC
IFC is the home of offbeat, unexpected comedies. Series Portlandia, Stan Against Evil, Baroness von Sketch Show, Documentary Now! and Brockmire air alongside fan-favorite movies and comedic cult TV shows. IFC is owned and operated by AMC Networks Inc., and available across multiple platforms. IFC is Always On, Slightly Off.

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