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2020 FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS
FILMMAKER GRANT WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Spirit Awards Winners to Be Revealed on Saturday, February 8
Broadcast Live on IFC at 5:00 pm ET / 2:00 pm PT

LOS ANGELES (January 4, 2020) – Today Film Independent announced the winners of its four filmmaker grants at the annual Spirit Awards Nominee Brunch held at BOA Steakhouse in West Hollywood. Director and Project Involve Fellow Jon M. Chu (In the Heights, Crazy Rich Asians) and actor and Spirit Award nominee LaKeith Stanfield (Knives Out, Uncut Gems) co-hosted the event and handed out the honors. Winners for the remaining categories will be revealed at the 2020 Film Independent Spirit Awards on Saturday, February 8. The Spirit Awards are the primary fundraiser for Film Independent’s year-round programs, which cultivate the careers of emerging filmmakers and promote diversity in the industry. The awards ceremony will be broadcast live exclusively on IFC at 5:00 pm ET / 2:00 pm PT.

Previous Spirit Awards grant winners include Kyle Patrick Alvarez (Someone to Watch Award), Effie T. Brown (Producers Award), Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi (Truer Than Fiction Award), Karin Chien (Producers Award), Justin Chon (Someone to Watch Award), Debra Granik (Bonnie Award), Bing Liu (Truer Than Fiction Award), Lynn Shelton (Someone to Watch Award), Nanfu Wang (Truer Than Fiction Award) and Chloe Zhaó (Bonnie Award).
"Today we celebrate the most talented emerging writers, producers and directors, working in fiction as well as non-fiction, with our Spirit Award Grants," said Film Independent President Josh Welsh. "With the Bonnie Award, we celebrate three of the most remarkable mid-career female filmmakers working today. Year-round, Film Independent is fiercely committed to champion inclusion, equality and diversity. We're enormously proud of our Grant nominees and winners, as well as all the Spirit Award nominees."

Kelly Reichardt received the third 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 Marielle Heller and Lulu Wang.

Mollye Asher received the 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 23rd year, includes a $25,000 unrestricted grant. Finalists for the award were Krista Parris and Ryan Zacarias.

Rashaad Ernesto Green, director of Premature, received the Someone to Watch Award. The award recognizes talented filmmakers of singular vision who have not yet received appropriate recognition. The award is in its 26th year and includes a $25,000 unrestricted grant presented by Bulleit Frontier Whiskey, a brand committed to celebrating those pushing the boundaries of their craft. Finalists for the award were Ash Mayfair, director of The Third Wife and Joe Talbot, director of The Last Black Man in San Francisco.

Nadia Shihab, director of Jaddoland, received the Truer Than Fiction Award. The award is presented to an emerging director of non-fiction features who has not yet received significant recognition. The award is in its 25th year and includes a $25,000 unrestricted grant. Finalists for the award were Khalik Allah, director of Black Mother, Davy Rothbart, director of 17 Blocks and Erick Stoll & Chase Whiteside, directors of América.

This year marks the 35th edition of the awards show that celebrates the best of independent film. Aubrey Plaza will host the show and Jon M. Chu is the 2020 Spirit Awards Honorary Chair.

For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Stephanie Terifay Bédiée, Director of Corporate Partnerships, at sterifay@filmindependent.org. To learn more about attending
the Spirit Awards and supporting Film Independent, please contact Jennifer Murby, Director of Individual Giving, at jmurby@filmindependent.org.

To download the Film Independent Spirit Awards logo, click here

Click here to see the list of this year’s nominees.

Media Credential Applications: filmindependent.org/press/

ABOUT THE FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS

Now in its 35th 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, IFC and Mazda. Bulleit Frontier Whiskey is the Official Spirit. FIJI Water is the Official Water. Getty Images is the Official Photographer. Town & Country Event Rentals is the Exclusive Rental Company.

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.

ABOUT IFC

IFC is the home of offbeat, unexpected comedies. Acclaimed series Documentary Now!, Brockmire, Baroness von Sketch Show, Sherman’s Showcase and the upcoming Year of the Rabbit 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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