

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Sundance Institute Announces
FILM FORWARD: Advancing Cultural Dialogue
Travels to Amman, Karak and Madaba, Jordan, April 13 - 18**

Sundance Institute and U.S. Federal Cultural Agencies Collaborate with The United States Embassy in Jordan and The Royal Film Commission to Host Free Screenings, Discussions and Workshops With Filmmaker Laura Nix of *The Light In Her Eyes* and Screenwriter Ligiah Villalobos of *Under The Same Moon (La Misma Luna)*

Los Angeles, CA — Sundance Institute and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities announced today that [FILM FORWARD: Advancing Cultural Dialogue](#) will travel with [eight films](#) to host free screenings, panel discussions and artist roundtables in Jordan, April 13 – 18. Filmmakers Laura Nix and Ligiah Villalobos will participate in the program. For a full schedule of events visit www.sundance.org/filmforward.

FILM FORWARD, a partnership of Sundance Institute and [U.S. federal cultural agencies](#), is a touring program that offers film screenings, workshops and discussions designed to foster dialogue and cross-cultural understanding. It uses the power of cinema to promote broader cultural understanding, inspire curiosity and enhance awareness of shared stories and values across generations, language, education and borders. The partnering federal agencies are the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities and Institute of Museum and Library Services.

"Sundance Institute is honored to present FILM FORWARD in the country of Jordan and to offer audiences in the region this cultural exchange opportunity," said Keri Putnam, Executive Director of Sundance Institute. "We have a long history of supporting and working with artists in Jordan and know that the country's cultural diversity and rich tradition of storytelling will lend itself well to this initiative."

"During the making of *The Light In Her Eyes*, we uncovered a lively debate about women's roles as mothers, teachers, wives, workers, sisters and daughters," said filmmaker Laura Nix. "I am excited to meet audiences in Jordan through the FILM FORWARD program and to reach common ground with the universal themes that touch us all."

"*La Misma Luna* explores the challenges a family faces when they are forced to live apart due to economic challenges," said screenwriter Ligiah Villalobos. "Even though this film is set in Mexico and the United States, it has been sobering to realize that this is a challenge thousands of families face around the world, which is why audiences have connected to the film, regardless of where it has screened."

FILM FORWARD's primary audience is communities without ready access to independent films, students and the local filmmaking community in each region. Common themes explored in the films include issues surrounding family, friendship and community, as well as the intersection of tradition and modern culture.

Sundance Institute staff members traveling with the program are: FILM FORWARD Consultant Jill Miller, FILM FORWARD Director Meredith Lavitt, Feature Film Program Creative Producing Initiatives Director Anne Lai and Editorial Coordinator Nate von Zumwalt.

Following FILM FORWARD's visit to Jordan, upcoming destinations include: China/Taiwan (May 17-26); Puerto Rico (June 10-15); Washington (September 4-7); Bosnia & Herzegovina (September 20-27); and Maine (September 30 – October 4). Completed programs include California, Mexico and Colombia.

FILM FORWARD Year Three Films:



[Beasts of the Southern Wild](#) (Director: Benh Zeitlin) — In a forgotten but defiant bayou community cut off from the rest of the world by a sprawling levee, a six-year-old girl exists on the brink of orphanhood. Buoyed by her childish optimism and extraordinary imagination, she believes that the natural order is in balance with the universe until a fierce storm changes her reality. Desperate to repair the structure of her world in order to save her ailing father and sinking home, this tiny hero must learn to survive unstoppable catastrophes of epic proportions.



[Bones Brigade: An Autobiography](#) (Director: Stacy Peralta) — A gang of disenfranchised kids reject mainstream culture, channel their controlled desperation into a loser activity and redefine winning in the process. Mentored by a former world champion skateboarder, the "Bones Brigade" became history's most influential skateboarding team. Their countercultural impact continues to affect change with best selling video games and books and millions of kids who embrace skateboarding around the world.



[Chasing Ice](#) (Director: Jeff Orlowski) — Acclaimed environmental photographer James Balog was once a skeptic about climate change. But through his Extreme Ice Survey, he discovers undeniable evidence of our changing planet. *Chasing Ice* reveals Balog's hauntingly beautiful, multi-year time-lapse videos of vanishing glaciers across the Arctic, all while delivering fragile hope to our carbon-powered planet.



[La Misma Luna \(Under The Same Moon\)](#) (Director: Patricia Riggen) — Even across thousands of miles, the special bond between a mother and son can never be broken. It gives hope to Carlitos, a scrappy nine-year-old boy whose mother, Rosario, has gone to America to build a better life for both of them. While Rosario struggles for a brighter future, fate forces Carlitos' hand and he embarks on an extraordinary journey to find her.



[The Light in Her Eyes](#) (Directors: Julia Meltzer and Laura Nix) — Houda al-Habash, a conservative woman preacher in Damascus, Syria, calls girls to the practice of Islam, teaching them that pursuing their ambitions is a way of worshipping God. Shot right before the uprising in Syria erupted, *The Light in Her Eyes* offers an extraordinary portrait of a leader who challenges the women of her community to live according to Islam, without giving up their dreams.



[The Loving Story](#) (Director: Nancy Buirski) — A racially-charged criminal trial and a heart-rending love story converge in this documentary about Mildred and Richard Loving, a part-black, part-Indian woman married to a white man in Jim Crow-era Virginia. Thrown into rat-infested jails and exiled from their hometown for 25 years, the Lovings fought back and changed history.



[Town of Runners](#) (Director: Jerry Rothwell) — *Town of Runners* is a feature documentary about young people from the Ethiopian rural town of Bekoji, whose runners have won 10 Olympic Gold medals in the last 20 years. The film tells the story of three teenagers who want to follow in their heroes' footsteps, as they move from school track to national competition and from childhood to adulthood, trying to run their way to a different life.



[Valley of Saints](#) (Director and screenwriter: Musa Syeed) — Using Kashmir's picturesque Dal Lake as its backdrop and underpinned by the political unrest in the region, this moving drama explores the relationship between two best friends and the female researcher studying environmental degradation who threatens to distract them from their dreams of escape.

Federal Partners

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) bridges the interests of American federal agencies and the private sector, supports special projects that increase participation and excellence in the arts and humanities, and helps incorporate these disciplines into White House objectives. First Lady Michelle Obama is the Honorary Chairman of the PCAH.

The National Endowment for the Arts was established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government. To date, the NEA has awarded more than \$4 billion to support artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities. The NEA extends its work through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector. To join the discussion on how art works, visit the NEA at arts.gov.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), an independent federal agency, provides support for documentary films, digital media and other educational programs in the humanities through competitive grant programs. The NEH is the nation's leading supporter of research, education, preservation and public programs in the humanities. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: www.neh.gov.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit <http://www.ims.gov> and follow [@US_IMLS](https://twitter.com/US_IMLS) on Twitter and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/USIMLS).

Sundance Institute

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a global, nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to nurturing artistic expression in film and theater, and to supporting intercultural dialogue between artists and audiences. The Institute promotes independent storytelling to unite, inform and inspire, regardless of geo-political, social, religious or cultural differences. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival and its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Born into Brothels*, *Trouble the Water*, *Son of Babylon*, *Amreeka*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Spring Awakening*, *Light in the Piazza* and *Angels in America*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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