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Sundance Institute 2020 Vanguard Award to Honor Radha Blank: Director, Writer, Actor of The Forty-Year-Old Version

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

Blank, â??19 Vanguard Awardee Lulu Wang in conversation on Sundance Collab on December 2, 2020

Los Angeles, CA â?? The nonprofit Sundance Institute announced today that **Radha Blank** will be honored with the 2020 **Vanguard Award presented by Acura,** given annually to an artist whose work highlights the art of storytelling and creative independence. The award honors the artistic achievement of her feature film directorial debut ***The Forty-Year-Old Version***, which premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was developed by Blank at the Instituteâ??s Labs. The Institute invites fans and supporters of independent cinema to celebrate Radha with a special event on Wednesday, December 2, 2020, hosted on Sundance Collab, the community platform for creators from around the world. The celebration, free for all, will feature **Octavia Spencer**, who was an advisor to Blank at the Labs, and a conversation between Blank and 2019 Vanguard Award recipient **Lulu Wang** (*The Farewell).*

Radha was honored with the Directing Award, U.S. Dramatic after ***The Forty-Year-Old Version*** had its world premiere in the U.S. Dramatic Competition category at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Sundance support for the project included development at the Screenwriters Lab, Directors Lab, Creative Producing Summit, and Catalyst Forum, as part of the Instituteâ??s programs that discover, support, and amplifies risk-taking and exciting independent artists across film, theatre, and media. Radha recently received 2 Gotham Award nominations, the Bingham Ray Breakthrough Director Award and for Best Screenplay, and was also named by Variety as one of the 10 Directors to Watch in 2020.



THE FORTY-YEAR-OLD VERSION: RADHA BLANK (WRITER, DIRECTOR) as RADHA. Cr. JEONG PARK/NETFLIX Â©2020

*The Forty-Year-Old Versio*n is a hilariously candid and deeply personal debut from writer/director Radha Blank. Radha, a down-on-her-luck NY playwright, is desperate for a breakthrough before 40. But when she foils what seems like her last shot at success, sheâ??s left with no choice but to reinvent herself as rapper RadhaMUSPrime. *The Forty-Year-Old Version* follows Radha as she vacillates between the worlds of Hip Hop and theater on a quest to find her true voice. A fresh addition to the New York City slice-of-life canon shot in lush black and white 35mm, Blankâ??s film is an ode to the unfulfilled, and those whose adversity gives them a one-of-a-kind story to tell. Acquired by Netflix out of the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, the film is currently available on Netflix.

Radhaâ??s singular vision, unique voice, and comedic tone were immediately captivating,â?• said Sundance Feature Film Program Founding Director **Michelle Satter.** â??We were proud to offer Rahda the time and space to grow her skills as a writer, director, and actor at our Labs. She developed the script with the support of enthusiastic advisors and her creative process was as gratifying to watch as getting to see the premiere at the most recent Sundance Film Festival. We are very excited to celebrate Radha on December 2, and honor her visionary talent with our 2020 Vanguard Award.â?•



THE FORTY-YEAR-OLD VERSION: Behind the scenes of RADHA BLANK (WRITER, DIRECTOR). Cr. JEONG PARK/NETFLIX Â©2020

â??Itâ??s a thrill to be acknowledged by my Sundance Institute family, whoâ??ve been behind me from the very beginning of the journey for this film. They provided support of my vision, development of my voice in the screenwriting and directing labs â?? where I not only received vital mentorship but also cultivated a fellowship with other filmmakers who, just like the wonderful champions at Sundance, will be a cherished part of my life and career from here until forever. Thanks so much, Sundance for seeing me, and lifting me up for my first film. Receiving this award affirms my path as a director, and is one hell of a way to begin my career. Thank you!,â?• said **Radha Blank**.

Sundance Instituteâ??s Vanguard Award honors artists whose work and vision represent the highest level of breakthrough innovation, originality, and independent spirit, as fostered in the Instituteâ??s Feature Film Program under Satterâ??s leadership over its 30-year history. Past Vanguard Award recipients include Benh Zeitlin (2012), Ryan Coogler (2013), Damien Chazelle (2014), Marielle Heller (2015), Nate Parker (2016), Dee Rees (2017), Boots Riley (2018), and Lulu Wang (2019). Acura has presented the award since 2015.

To register to attend the celebration go to https://collab.sundance.org/catalog/Radha-Blank-Vanguard-Award

Sundance Institute
As a champion and curator of independent stories for the stage and screen, the nonprofit Sundance Institute provides and preserves the space for artists in film, theatre, film composing, and digital media to create and thrive. Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, the Instituteâ??s signature Labs, granting, and mentorship programs which are dedicated to developing new work and take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally, are supported largely through contributed revenue. Sundance Co//ab, a digital community platform, brings artists together to learn from each other and Sundance Advisors and connect in a creative space, developing and sharing works in progress. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences and artists to ignite new ideas, discovering original voices, and build a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *Clemency, Never Rarely Sometimes Always*, *Zola*, *On The Record, Boys State, The Farewell, Honeyland*, *One Child Nation*, *The Souvenir, The Infiltrators, Sorry to Bother You, Wonâ??t You Be My Neighbor?, Hereditary, Call Me By Your Name, Get Out, The Big Sick, Mudbound, Fruitvale Station*, *City So Real, Top of the Lake, Between the World & Me, Wild Goose Dreams* and *Fun Home*. Join Sundance Institute on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

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