Sundance Institute Names 20 Fellows

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

20 Fellows Named Across Feature Film Directors and Screenwriters Labs, Native Lab

Customized Support for Emerging Creators, in Collaborative Digital Environment



PARK CITY, UTAH â?? The Sundance Institute today named the artists and projects selected for the first group of the upcoming signature summer Labs including 12 fellows for the Directors and Screenwriters Labs and 9 fellows participating in the Native Lab (one fellow will participate in both Labs). The Labs provide a space for writers and directors to spend time developing their craft and selected projects. Elements of this yearâ??s Labs will take place digitally via Sundance Collab. At the heart of the Instituteâ??s commitment to supporting and cultivating artists, these Labs connect a curated selection of independent storytellers with the larger creative and artistic community, enabling field-wide benefits as Creative Advisors and Industry Mentors generously give back, inspire, and learn from rising artists.

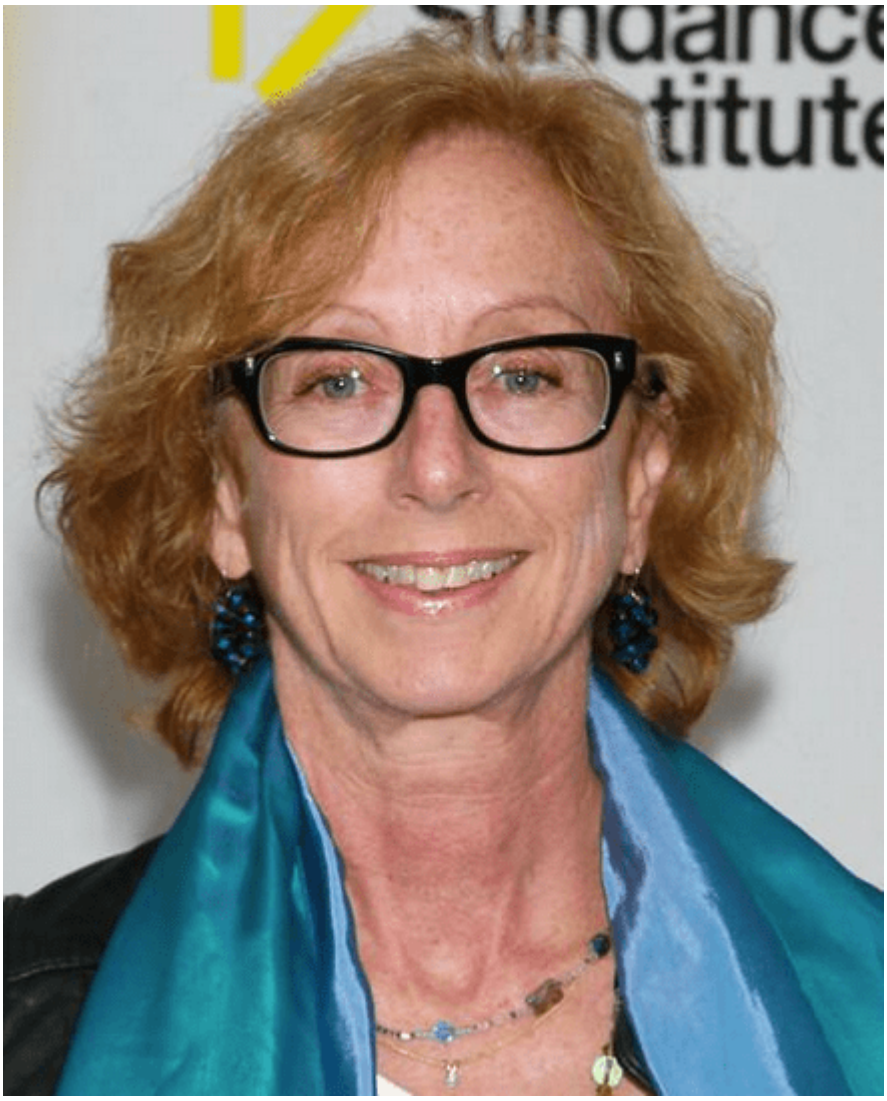
During the Directors Lab (June 1 â?? July 2, 2021), filmmakers will participate in a robust schedule of learning opportunities focusing on key areas of craft including directing actors, exploring the visual storytelling language of their films, and building a creatively rigorous pre-production process. They will engage with advisors through roundtable discussions, presentations, and one-on-one meetings and have the opportunity to rehearse, shoot, and edit a scene from their work-in-progress screenplays as an exercise in their home location. The Screenwriters Lab (July 6 â?? 9, 2021) will include one-on-one story sessions and customized support for the continued development of their original and timely screenplays.



The Native Lab (May 10 â?? 21, 2021) focuses on the specific development of storytellers from Native and Indigenous backgrounds, encompassing feature film, episodic work, and general cultivation of Artists-in-Residence. Participating are Native Lab Fellows, 2 Artists-in-Residence, and 3 Indigenous Program Full Circle Fellows, supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (U.S.-based Native artists, aged 18-24). During the Lab, Fellows will hone their storytelling and technical skills in a hands-on and supportive environment, including one-on-one feedback sessions with advisors and roundtable discussions. With Fellows working across both feature and episodic formats, they will also explore and discuss indigenizing their creative practices in regard to writing their scripts.

These Labs are organized under the aegis of Feature Film Program Founding Director **Michelle Satter**, FFP Deputy Director **Ilyse McKimmie**, and Indigenous Program Director **N. Bird Runningwater**, and

are a key part of the Instituteâ??s year-round continuum of customized artist support, including creative mentorship, direct granting, and tactical advice from Institute staff and industry professionals.



Michelle Satter

â??Weâ??re thrilled to be launching such a visionary group of filmmakers who have met this yearâ??s challenges with an unstoppable resilience and spirit of collaboration and creativity,â?• said **Satter**. â??Their stories bear witness to the world weâ??re living in, and give voice to characters and worlds that are both deeply personal and universal. Weâ??re excited to provide meaningful and holistic mentorship and connections to these artists, and be part of their burgeoning creative and career development as writers and directors.â?•



â??Support for Indigenous storytellers has been part of the Instituteâ??s mission since its founding,â?• said Runningwater. â??Weâ??re excited to nurture this cohort of filmmakers and their stories, strengthening the Indigenous lens through which their stories are being told and supporting them along their creative journey to the screen and audiences.â?•

Creative Advisors for the Native Lab include: James Ashcroft, Kat Candler, Aurora Guerrero, and Jennifer Reeder.

Creative Advisors for the Directors Lab include: Directors Miguel Arteta, Joan Darling, Rick Famuyiwa, Gyula Gazdag (Artistic Director, Directors Lab), Lesli Linka Glatter, Keith Gordon, Randa Haines, Kasi Lemmons, Ira Sachs, Walter Salles, Joan Tewkesbury; DPâ??s Charlotte Bruus Christensen, Robert Elswit, Stephen Goldblatt, Bradford Young; Editors Joi McMillon, Michelle Tesoro and Dylan Tichenor, and Casting Directors Jodi Angstreich, Eyde Belasco, Maribeth Fox, Richard Hicks. Creative Advisors for the Screenwriters Lab include: Naomi Foner, John Gatins, Gyula Gazdag, Felicia Henderson, Amanda Idoko, BrÃ¡ulio Mantovani, Malia Scotch Marmo, Tracy Oliver, Howard Rodman (Artistic Director, Screenwriters Lab), Tyger Williams, and Doug Wright.

The Sundance Institute Feature Film Program is supported by explore.org, a direct charitable activity of the Annenberg Foundation; Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; Will & Jada Smith Family Foundation; Maja

Kristin; NBCUniversal; Hollywood Foreign Press Association; Karen Lauder; Ray and Dagmar Dolby Family Fund; Sandra and Malcolm Berman Charitable Foundation; Comedy Central; National Endowment for the Arts; NHK/NHK Enterprises, Inc.; Amazon Studios; Kimberly Stewardâ??K Period Media; SAGindie; Philip Fungâ??A3 Foundation; Rosalie Swedlin and Robert Cort; Directors Guild of America; Deborah Reinisch and Michael Theodore Fund; and Writers Guild of America West.

The Sundance Institute Indigenous Program is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, WarnerMedia, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Nia Tero Foundation, Indigenous Screen Office, SAGindie, New Zealand Film Commission, Jenifer and Jeffrey Westphal, Indigenous Media Initiatives, Felix Culpa, Sarah Luther, and Susan Shilliday.

Fellows and projects selected for the 2021 Native Lab:

Miciana Alise (Tlingit)
Mia, Too
In this life, a womanâ??s biggest challenges are the love she chooses to accept, the tough love of a well-meaning mother, and the absence of love that heartbreak leaves behind. Mia will have to face them all in order to find a way to finally love herself.

Miciana Alise interned with Jesse Collins Entertainment during the 2013 Black Entertainment Television Awards and served as First Assistant Director under Director Randy Reinholz during Perseverance Theatreâ??s production of an original Alaska Native play. She penned her first feature length script in 2018, leading to her selection as a 2019 Sundance Institute Indigenous Film Fellow. She hosts a YouTube channel focused on educating Native youth regarding current events and Indigenous history. *Fancy Dance*, a feature she co-wrote with Erica Tremblay, was included on the inaugural Indigenous List hosted by The Black List. She is a current Sundance Institute Screenwriting Fellow.

Doane Tulugaq Avery (IÃ±upiaq)
Mama Dragon
As a 40-year-old queer ex-Mormon begins to navigate the world as a recent divorcee, she is surprised to find support in raising her nonbinary child from an advocacy group called Mama Dragons, a Mormon led organization that breathes fire for their LGBTQ family members.

Doane Tulugaq Avery is a filmmaker whose stories focus on feminine, queer, and Indigenous character-driven narratives. She was the recipient of the LA Skins Fest Emerging Filmmaker Award and the imagineNATIVE Jane Glassco Award for Emerging Talent. Her short films have screened at Outfest, Oaxaca Film Fest, Seattle Queer Film Festival, and MaÌ?oriland. She was selected as a fellow for the Sundance Institute + IAIA Native Writers Workshop, the Barcid Foundationâ??s Native American TV Writers Lab, and the 2nd Annual Native American Writers Room sponsored by the Pop Culture Collaborative. She recently worked with Topple Productions as a co-writer on the forthcoming film *Mothertrucker*. She received an MFA in Film Directing from the California Institute of the Arts. Doane is from the Pacific Northwest and lives in Los Angeles.

Bryson Chun (Kanaka Maoli)
Poi Dogs
When a small-town, high-end Hawaiâ??i dog groomer learns that a hit was put on her on the Dark Web, she has to race to find the culprit among her friends and family before itâ??s too late.

Bryson Chun is a Native Hawaiian filmmaker who has produced award-winning short and feature films in Hawaiâ??i that have gone on to screen for PBS, The Smithsonian Institution, The Criterion Collection, and at festivals all over the world. He was a writing fellow for Sundance, imagineNATIVE, LA Skins, and â??Ohina Labs where he developed his Greenlight award-winning short *Other People* under the mentorship of Thor Ragnarok writer Eric Pearson. His television pilot *Poi Dogs* was recently selected to be part of The Blacklistâ??s Inaugural Indigenous List. He was part of the 2021 CAPE New Writers Fellowship and is currently pursuing his MFA in Screenwriting from the Institute of American Indian Arts.

Alexandra Lazarowich (Cree)
Sweet Home Reservation
After the death of her aunt, a successful fashion business woman returns to her childhood home on the Cree reservation in Northern Alberta, Canada for the funeral. However unbeknownst to her large, loud Native family, she brings home her new fiancÃ© â?? a musician from Malibu.â??

Alexandra Lazarowich is an award-winning Cree filmmaker from northern Alberta. Her short film *Fast Horse* was honored with The Special Jury Prize for Directing at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. Her body of work as director and producer include *Lake*, *Indian Rights for Indian Women*, *Cree Code Talker* , *Empty Metal* and *INAATE/SE/*. She is the series producer for the CBCâ??s multi-award-winning comedy documentary series *Still Standing*. Her fellowship is made possible with support from the Indigenous Screen Office.

2021 Native Lab â?? Artist In Residence:

Charine Pilar Gonzales (San Ildefonso Pueblo)
Rosa (at booth #515)
An aspiring Pueblo photographer drops out of college and decides to sell her photos at Native art shows full-time to support her family. She struggles with self-doubt, competitive attitudes and understanding the market â?? in order to establish herself as an artist.

Charine Pilar Gonzales (San Ildefonso Pueblo) is a Tewa filmmaker whose work focuses on empowering women, celebrating resilience and laughing in-between. Gonzales is Lead Editor for Native Lens, a crowdsourced series by RMPBS and KSUT Tribal Radio. Sheâ??s a 2021 graduate from IAIA where she studied Cinematic Arts and Technology. Sheâ??s a current Artist in Business Leadership Fellow through First Peoples Fund. Sheâ??s an alumna of the Indigenous Film Opportunity Fellowship and Full Circle Fellowship, both through the Sundance Instituteâ??s Indigenous Program. Gonzales earned an English-Communication BA from Fort Lewis College in 2017. Her favorite foods are red chile and oven bread.

Tommy Pico (Kumeyaay) â?? writer
Sometimes
Tommy is a â??sometimesâ?• person: sometimes Brooklyn, sometimes rez, but never both. When his best friend becomes a punk singer, a dream Tommy wanted for himself, his identities begin to blur

against a backdrop of punk music, ceremony, and the ghost of an ex he killed on the rez.

Tommy â??Teebsâ?• Pico is a poet, podcaster, and TV writer. He authored the books *IRL, Nature Poem, Junk,* and *Feed*. He hosts the podcasts Food 4 Thot and Scream, Queen! and writes on the TV shows *Reservation Dogs* and *Resident Alien*.

The 2021 Native Lab Fellows will be joined at Lab by the 2021 Full Circle Fellows:

Jamie John (Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians)
Jamie John is a two-spirit Anishinaabe and Korean multidisciplinary artist living in their historic homeland of so-called Michigan. Theyâ??re an enrolled tribal citizen of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, a graduate in interdisciplinary arts at Interlochen Arts Academy, and currently reconnecting to their Anishinaabe ceremonial way of life. Art has been used as a tool to carve out a space for Jamie despite the impact of colonialism, intergenerational suffering, and gender violence. With works tackling topics of colonialism and historical loss, Jamie attempts to pull the thread of resistance to these atrocities through cultural connection and emphasizing collective survival.

Sarah Liese (DinÃ© and an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians)
Sarah Liese is a masterâ??s student at Ohio University, where she studies journalism and photography. She is a research assistant to Dr. Victoria LaPoe, which has allowed her to learn more about Indigenous reporting â?? a topic Liese is passionate about, as she is DinÃ© and a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. In her free time, Sarah works as a poetry reader for the New Ohio Review. She plans to earn her masterâ??s degree from Ohio University in April 2022 and begin her career as a documentary filmmaker, highlighting Indigenous stories. She is a graduate of Mississippi University in the state where she grew up and maintains strong family connections.

Christina Zuni (Isleta Pueblo)
Christina Zuni is a Native filmmaker and cinematographer from Isleta Pueblo, N.M. She is a soon-to-be graduate at New Mexico State University in the Digital Filmmaking program. Growing up in a culture-driven community, she developed an interest in pueblo art at a young age. The combination of Native art and visual media heavily influences the themes present in her work. By giving a voice to the unheard and unspoken, she advocates and empowers communities in ways that uplift them. Her goal in filmmaking is to enrich humanityâ??s interest in Native American traditions and encourage pueblo youth to find their creativity.

Fellows and projects selected for the 2021 Directors Lab are:

Fancy Dance (U.S.A.)
Erica Tremblay, co-writer/director
Miciana Alise, co-writer
Following the disappearance of her sister, a Native American hustler kidnaps her niece from her white grandparents and sets out for the state powwow in the hopes of keeping whatâ??s left of their family intact.

Erica Tremblay is an award-winning writer and director from the Seneca-Cayuga Nation. Her short film *Little Chief* premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was included on IndieWireâ??s top 10 must-see short films at the fest. Tremblay was a 2018 Sundance Native Film Lab Fellow and she is a current Sundance Screenwriters Lab Fellow. She was recently honored as a 40 Under 40 Native

American. Tremblay lives on Cayuga Lake in upstate New York where she is studying her Indigenous language.

Miciana Alise interned with the Native American Journalists Association in 2011 and 2012. She served as first assistant director under the guidance of director Randy Reinholz during his production of the original Alaska Native play, *William Inc.*, for Perseverance Theater in Juneau, Alaska. Alise self-published her first book, *Heavens & Heathens*, a young adult fantasy fiction novel in 2016, and was selected as a Sundance Institute Indigenous Film Fellow in 2018. Alise is a 2021 Sundance Screenwriters Lab fellow and she is currently a student in the Film and Media Studies Program at Arizona State University.

forward (U.S.A.)
Cris Gris, director
Mary Ann Anane, writer
After moving to a working-class part of the Hamptons, a Latinx teen employed as a housecleaner for the elite explores identity and love in the shadow of gentrification and inevitable loss.

Cris Gris is a Mexican filmmaker whose films have screened internationally in prestigious festivals, including La Semaine de la Critique, Festival de Cannes. Sheâ??s known for moving between acting, writing, and directing, and landed her first leading role in the feature independent drama *Fish Bones* (2018). Her short *San Miguel* (2018) received the Spike Lee Film Production Fund, the HFPA Fellows Fund, and was named a 2019 NBR student grant winner. Her short *Pia & Mike* (2019) premiered at FICM. Gris is a Film Independent Project Involve 2020 fellow and a 2021 Sundance Screenwriters Lab fellow. *forward* will be her feature directorial debut.

Mary Ann Anane is a Ghanaian-born, New-Jersey raised screenwriter and novelist. She is a graduate of Northwestern University with a concentration in playwriting. Anane is a 2021 Sundance Screenwriters Lab Fellow, 2020 Athena Feature Lab fellow, 2020 Film Independentâ??s Project Involve fellow, and a finalist for MACROâ??s inaugural Episodic Lab. Outside of writing, Anane was a development assistant at Endeavor Content, a producerâ??s assistant on *The Farewell* and *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, and has worked on off-Broadway productions at New York Theatre Workshop. All her titles are lowercased.

The Macrobiotic Toker (U.S.A.)
Tracy Droz Tragos, writer/director
Living in a mommune, balancing her alternative lifestyle and a bitter separation, Sulaâ??s life is plunged into potential chaos by an unplanned pregnancy. After discovering how to procure abortion pills online, she travels an unexpected path to become an underground supplier, an accidental pro-choice activist, and ultimately, a convicted felon. Inspired by true events.

Tracy Droz Tragos is a writer, filmmaker, and mother of two kids. Her documentary work includes *Abortion: Stories Women Tell*, the HBO film about unplanned pregnancies and resilience; *Be Good, Smile Pretty*, an Emmy Award-winning documentary about the grief and healing of survivors of the Vietnam War; and *Rich Hill* (Grand Jury Prize, U.S. Documentary, 2014 Sundance Film Festival) for which she embedded in the homes of low-income families in rural Missouri. In 2020, Tragos won a Guggenheim Fellowship for her long-form work on the documentary *Sarah*. She received her MFA in screenwriting from USC.

The Mysterious Gaze of the Flamingo (Chile)
Diego CÃ©spedes, writer/director
Chile, 1984. A remote mining town is stricken with a mysterious disease, said to be transmitted between men through eye contact. Twelve-year-old Lidia must protect her older brother Alexo, who raised her, when he comes under threat from the fearful townspeople.

Diego CÃ©spedes is a Chilean filmmaker. In 2018, he wrote and directed his first short, *The Summer of the Electric Lion*, which won the CinÃ©fondation First Prize at Cannes Film Festival and the Nest First Prize at San Sebastian Film Festival, and also screened at Sundance, Palm Springs, and AFI Fest, among others. *The Mysterious Gaze of the Flamingo* will mark his feature directorial debut. The project has been supported by the CinÃ©fondation Residence (Cannes), the Ikusmira Berriak Residence (San Sebastian) and the Sundance Screenwriters Lab. It also won the TorinoFilmLab and the Ibermedia production fund.

Neon Tilapia (Kenya, U.S.A.)
Tony Koros, writer/director
When a dangerous water-weed threatens to take over his lake and livelihood, a fisherman in rural Kenya forms an unexpected alliance with his estranged granddaughter to fight back using glowing, genetically modified fish. As strange lights appear in the lake, chaos erupts in the village, and the two are challenged to reach a new understanding of each other.

Tony Koros is a New York-based Kenyan screenwriter, director and producer. He is a 2021 Sundance Screenwriters Lab Fellow, a recipient of the 2020 Tribeca Film Institute Sloan Grant, a 2020 Cine Qua Non Lab Script Revision Lab fellowship, the Martin E. Segal Production Grant and the 2019 Hollywood Foreign Press Association grant. His latest short film, *Tithes & Offerings,* premiered in competition at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2019 and has since been acquired for distribution by CANAL+. His previous short films have screened at over 70 international film festivals including Palm Springs International Shortfest where he won the Alexis Prize in 2017, Clermont-Ferrand 2018, FESPACO 2017, and won the Sembene prize at the Zanzibar International Film Festival. He holds an MFA in Filmmaking from New York Universityâ??s Tisch School of the Arts (2018).

Parts & Labor (U.S.A.)
Cristina Costantini, co-writer/director
Jacob Albert, co-writer
Working single mom Maria Burgos signs on as a gestational surrogate for a wealthy, controlling New York couple to pay for her sonâ??s college tuition. She tolerates their degrading demands until the relationship explodes, and Maria seizes the moment to blackmail her way to the American Dream.

Cristina Costantini is an Emmy Award-winning director. Her latest documentary M*ucho Mucho Amor* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and on Netflix in 2020. The film was nominated for a Critics Choice Award and won the Best Latinx Film award from NALIP. Her first feature documentary, *Science Fair*, won the Sundance Festival Favorite Award as well as the SXSW Audience Award, a Critics Choice Award for Best First Time Director, and an Emmy award. The Milwaukee native is a Yale grad who now lives in California with her husband and their pug dog Harriet.

Jacob Albert lives in Oakland. He ghostwrites popular science books for research scientists and is at work on a novel. Formerly a Stegner Fellow at Stanford, he has received fellowships from the Blue Mountain Center, the Michener Center, and the Elizabeth George Foundation.

A Real One (U.S.A.)
McKenzie Chinn, writer/director
A bright teenager in a working class neighborhood on Chicagoâ??s south side discovers the power and beauty of true friendship when her illicit relationship with a teacher is discovered amid the final weeks of her senior year in high school.

McKenzie Chinn is a filmmaker, actor, and poet based in Chicago. She is the writer and lead actor of *Olympia*, which premiered at the 2018 LA Film Festival and won the Audience Award at the 2019 Bentonville Film Festival. Her poetry has been nominated for multiple awards including a Pushcart Prize. She is part of Growing Concerns Poetry Collective whose releases include the album BIG DARK BRIGHT FUTURES (2020) and the poetry collection *Five Fifths* (Candor Arts 2018). She is a 2021 Sundance Screenwriters Lab Fellow and the recipient of the inaugural NBCUniversal Grant through the Bentonville Film Foundation.

Stampede (U.S.A.)
Sontenish Myers, writer/director
On a southern plantation in the 1800s, Lena is an 11-year-old slave with telekinetic abilities she cannot yet control. When she is separated from her mother and moved into close quarters with the volatile Masterâ??s wife, Lena must grapple with the danger of her gift as well as its potential power.

Sontenish Myers is a Jamaican American writer-director based in Harlem, New York. She is a graduate of NYUâ??s Graduate Film program where sheâ??s now an adjunct professor. Her short film, *Cross My Heart*, won the Alexis Award for Best Emerging Student Filmmaker at the Palm Springs International Shortfest and the Vimeo Staff Pick Award at Hamptons International Film Festival. *Stampede*, her debut feature, was accepted into the Sundance Screenwriters Lab, HIFF Screenwriting Lab, Film Independent Screenwriting Lab and IFP Week. It is also a selected script on the Black List 2019, and a recipient of SFFILMâ??s Rainin Grant and Tribeca All Access Grant.

The 2021 Directors Lab Fellows will be joined at the Screenwriters Lab by:

White Knuckle (U.S.A.)
Xavier Coleman, writer/director
When a serial killer begins targeting the gentrifiers of a dwindling, historically Black neighborhood, a young newcomer must determine the murdererâ??s identityâ??before sheâ??s next.

Xavier Coleman is a Brooklyn-based filmmaker with a focus on the intersection of genre and identity. His most recent directorial effort was the short film, *White Knuckle*. The film screened at the Movies Under the Stars series presented by the N.Y.C. Mayorâ??s Office, and was listed in AMC and Shudderâ??s Horror Noire syllabus of Black horror. The feature-length screenplay for *White Knuckle* was selected for the 2021 Sundance Screenwriters Intensive. As a nonfiction editor, Coleman has worked with writers and directors including Elliot Page, Ira Glass, and Joe Berlinger. His latest documentary feature film as an editor, *Thereâ??s Something in the Water*, premiered at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival.

About Sundance Institute
As a champion and curator of independent stories for the stage and screen, 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, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. 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, discover original voices, and build a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such recent projects as *Clemency, I Carry You With Me, Never Rarely Sometimes Always*, *Zola*, *Time, Minari, Boys State, American Factory, 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.

Category

1. television

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