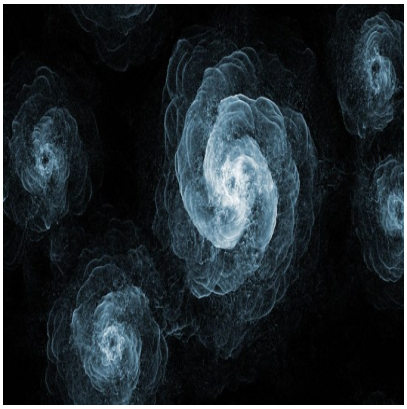
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1226 N Salsipuedes Unit C 1(805)704-5994 |https://hollywoodglee.com Larry@HollywoodGlee.com



Sundance 2020 Wrap-up: So Many Films, So Little Time

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson February 10, 2020



Robert Redford, Former President of the Sundance Institue, announced he was stepping down as th
Festival Press Conference. (Photo by Larry Gleeson)

The 2020 Sundance Film Festival started off most curiouslyâ?¦.again. Last year in a highly dramatic moment, the face of the festival Robert Redford made an entrance with a deafening silence to announce, â??I think itâ??s time for me to be going.â?• I sat in a semi-state of bodily paralysis as my mind searched for an answer to his opening words. Whew! Thank heavens I didnâ??t have to wait long for an answer as Redford continued speaking explaining he wanted to spend more time with the films and the filmmakers. This year, his letter (1_SFF 2020 Robert Redford Letter-1) says much of what he communicated intentionally last year on that fateful day.

This year I was ready for anythingâ?¦.except a virtual press conference with a content-rich digital **Day One Press Kit**, including video remarks from executive leadership as well as details about the Festival and the Instituteâ??s global year-round work. Watch Keri Putnam, John Cooper, and Kim Yutani explain the importance of freedom of speech, the freedom of expression, the metaphysical principle of

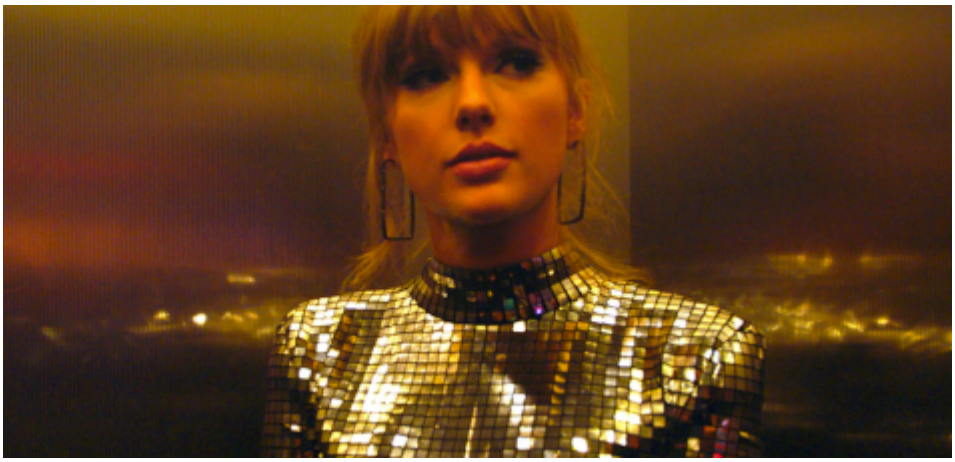
change, and the driving force behind programming and curating a film festival from more than 15,000 submissions. Youâ??ll be glad you did!

That evening, Sundance Instituteâ??s annual fundraising event **An Artist at the Table Presented by IMDb Pro** began with the premiere of *Crip Camp,* winner of the **Audience Award: U.S. Documentary**, Presented by Acura and was followed by a celebratory dinner during which the Institute honored Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation, with the Vanguard Award for Philanthropy. Proceeds from the evening went to advancing Sundance Instituteâ??s mission and programs that discover, support and amplify risk-taking and exciting independent film, media and theatre artists. And, as luck would have it, I quickly ran into several of my cohorts from the Telluride Film Festival. One of which, I would have the distinct pleasure of conducting a sit-down interview. Sam Doerge, the Telluride Art Director, was handling duties at the New Frontiers Center Festival Installation Coordinator. More on that later!

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New Frontiers Center Festival Coordinator, Sam Doerge. (Photo by Larry Gleeson)



The film I was most excited to see â?? *Taylor Swift: Miss Americana*, a documentary directed by Lana Wilson was making its world premiere at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival in the late slot. Admittedly, in tears after seeing Swift perform â??Better Man,â?• in Brian Loschiavoâ??s extraordinary documentary, *Bluebird*, at the 50th Anniversary of the Nashville Film Festival, I was not disappointed! No tears. Just an overwhelming sense of awe-inspiring respect.



The Climb

Friday morning brought a wonderful opportunity to catch *The Climb,* winner of the Coup de Coeur prize in the Un Certain Regard section of the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, at a Press & Industry screening at the Holiday Village Theatre. Traversing the ups and downs of life, the film â??utilizes ingeniously self-aware dialogueâ?• to capture the chaos of fractured friendships and its accompanying family life. Highly recommended!

Friday, January 24th, ushered in the opening of numerous venues on Old Town Main Street. The **2020 Sundance ASCAP** (the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, a professional membership organization of songwriters, composers and music publishers) **Music CafÃ©** launched with a special introduction by Peter Golub, Director of the Sundance Film Music Program. The Music CafÃ© was standing room only throughout the weekend.



Matt Berninger and his band with a view of the room â?? Photo by Fred Hayes



Ron Artis II and band on the CafÃ© stage â?? Photo by Fred Hayes



The Easterseals Disability Services hosted a panel on the influence of diversity and inclusion initiativ

On Saturday, **Easterseals Disability Services** hosted a panel on the influence of diversity and inclusion initiatives in Hollywood in increasing the visibility of/opportunities for talent with disabilities in the entertainment industry. An underreported phenomenon is seemingly occurring in the film and television industries. Included below is the taped panel in its entirety. Itâ??s inspiring and insightful!



Standing behind **Nick Novicki** (front), ESSC board member and founder of the Easterseals Film Challenge, are L-R: **Angela Williams**, CEO, National Easterseals; **Franklin Leonard**, Founder and CEO, The Black List; Mark Whitley, CEO, ESSC; panel moderator **Britt Stephens**, Celebrity &

Entertainment Editor, *Pop Sugar*; **Shoshannah Stern**, Creator, Executive Producer, Writer and Star of Sundance TVâ??s *This Close*; **Shanique Bonelli-Moore**, Executive Director of Inclusion, United Talent Agency; **John Travis**, VP of Brand Marketing, Adobe; and **Nancy Weintraub**, Chief Development Officer, ESSC. (Photo courtesy of **Vicki Greenleaf**)



Panel moderator, **Britt Stephens**, Celebrity & Entertainment Editor, *Pop Sugar,* participates in the E



John Travis, VP of Brand Marketing, Adobe, participates in the Easterseals Disability Services panel

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Has Recent Industry Emphasis on Diversity & Inclusion Influenced the Way We Tell Stories?

In addition, Brand Storytelling at Sundance Film Festival wrapped itâ??s fifth annual â??festival within a festival.â?• Over 250 attendees were present at the invite-only, sold-out event for keynote chats, panel presentations, film premiers, and screenings, live musical performances while bringing in major brands, media and production companies, talent, advertising, and PR agencies.



Ariel Tweto, star of *Into Americaâ??s Wild,* speaks at Brand Storytelling at Sundancer Film Festival (

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Presented Feature Film Prize to *Tesla*. Michael Almereydaâ??s Tesla was formally presented with a $20,000 check for winning the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Feature Film Prize. The awards were presented at an afternoon cocktail reception at High West Distillery. These activities are part of the Sundance Institute Science-In-Film Initiative, which is made possible by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.



Actor Ethan Hawke, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Feature Film Prize Winner Michael Almereyda and A
Sloan Foundation Vice President and Program Director Doron Weber attend the Alfred P. Sloan Fou
Feature Film Prize Reception at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Â© 2020 Sundance Institute | pho
Jovelle Tamayo.

The World Premiere of *Horse Girl* from writer/director Jeff Baena took audiences by surprise with a sizzling performance from Alison Brie. An official selection of the Premieres program at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival, *Horse Girl* was executively produced by the Duplass Brothers, Jay and Mark. Stay tuned for a full, unadulterated review



Actor Alison Brie attends the World Premiere of *Horse Girl* by Jeff Baena, an official selection of the program at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Â© 2020 Sundance Institute | photo by Lauren Wester

Talent Forum convened for three days, January 28-30th during the festival bringing together a robust slate of artists with projects across all platforms and at varied and pivotal stages from development through completion.



Anne Lai

â??Weâ??re thrilled to [have} welcome(d) an extraordinary collection of artists from 22 countries who bring remarkable voices and work to connect with industry, advocates, and each other as they move their work and careers forward,â?• noted Anne Lai, Sundance Instituteâ??s Director of Creative Producing & Artist Support.

SFF20 Talent Forum Projects & Fellows

The Movie That Blew My Mind kicked off the 2020 Talent Forum panel at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. An Offscreen event the panel featured hosts John Cooper (Director, Sundance Film Festival) and Tabitha Jackson (Director, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program) with Tessa Thompson, Tom McCarthy, and other special guests, each of whom selected a cinema moment that was inspiring or formative (in their life or in shaping their creative sensibility).



Actor Tessa Thompson at *The Movie That Blew My Mind*, a festival panel at the 2020 Sundance Film
Â© 2020 Sundance Institute | photo by Maya Dehlin.



Tabitha Jackson (Director, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program) at *The Movie That Blew* festival panel at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Â© 2020 Sundance Institute | photo by Maya Deh

An unexpected treat happened with the French episodic *Laetitia.* Acting on a suggestion from Antoine Maron, an Art Director in the French film industry, I squeezed into the Academy Award-winning Jean-Xavier de Lestrade screening and stayed for the Q & A with de Lestrade. His extraordinary attention to detail propels a powerful story based on an historically documented criminal case. This 2002 Academy-award winner for Best Documentary is worth listening to and has a captivating presence. Please see the 2020 Sundance Film Festivalâ??s Meet the Artist video and stay tuned for a capsule review of the evening.



Academy Award-winning French filmmaker Jean-Xavier de Lestrade at the 2020 Sundance Film Fes



Academy Award-winning French filmmaker, Jean-Xavier de Lestrade at the 2020 Sundance Film Fe



Academy Award-winning French filmmaker Jean-Xavier de Lestrade at the 2020 Sundance Film Fes

Other favorites were *Okavango: River of Dreams*, *Kajillionaire*. *Max Richterâ??s Sleep*, *Dissident, Softie, Glorias, Horse Girl, Be Water, Ironbark, On the Record, The Father, Sylvieâ??s Love,* and *Mucho, Mucho, Amor*. Check back regularly as these films, all of which are worthy of review, will soon be making their way up the â??films to be reviewedâ?• list and hopefully be available for viewing.

Without further adieu, the Festival wrapped up with the **Awards Night Ceremony & Party** on February 1, 2020, and with previously announced jurors awarding prizes to films in the U.S. Dramatic, U.S. Documentary, World Cinema Dramatic, World Cinema Documentary, and NEXT categories. **2020 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS**

Until next year, Iâ??ll see you at the movies!



*Featured photo: A still from *Breathe* by Diego Galafassi, an official selection of the New Frontier Exhibitions program at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. Courtesy of Sundance Institute.

Category

1. #Sundance
2. Sundance
3. Sundance Film Festival
4. television

Date Created
February 11, 2020
Author
hollywoodglee