

Sundance 2021 Press Welcome

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

The 2021 Sundance Press Welcome seemed to be more of an overview of the festival content. And, rightly so as this yearâ??s format is digital and virtual. As the relatively new festival director, Tabitha Jackson, put it, â??the only place for hugs and seeing Sundance friends is in New Frontiers,â?• a cutting edge media and film section, headed up by the talented Chief Curator Shari Frilot. Jackson pumped New Frontiers as the new hangout space in-between screenings, talks, and conversations. I, for one, am excited and ordered a new pair of VR goggles to ensure I can participate in the most social events. And, I look forward to seeing some of you inside New Frontiers this year.

With COVID-19, the challenges in human hours and in dollars spent were immense in creating this yearâ??s 2021 Sundance Film Festivalâ??s digital platform. Chief Executive Kari Putnam echoed the struggles in assembling and carrying out the massive and elaborate infrastructure to ensure the artistsâ?? energetic work is paramount while exuding a deeply heartfelt thank you to the Sundance supporters and sponsors unwavering. The lineup for the 2021 Sundance Film Festival, taking place on the Sundance-built and robust online platform, goes well beyond features and short films, episodic work and the VR/XR of New Frontierâ??it also encompasses a curated program of free special events, conversations and activations available to the global public. Naturally for me, I proceeded over to check out the Acura Village Stage â?? itâ??s very nice with daily programming â?? as I wait for my VR goggles to arrive. Notably, Acura returns as one of the festivalâ??s presenting sponsors.

Some of the conversation highlights, respectively, from the panel of Gina Duncan, Jackson, and Putnam. (Duncan sits in the newly created [by Tabitha Jackson] Producing Director seat) are **The Power of Story,** inspired by the work of the late historian Howard Zinn (*A Peopleâ??s History of the United States*), bringing to life, through readings and songs, the voices of rebels, dissenters, and visionaries from our pastâ??and present; the Tabitha Jackson-led Big Conversation, **The Past In the Present: A Personal Journey through Race, History, and Filmmaking**, a conversation about white supremacy, history, creative expression, and his personal journey from the Academy Award-nominated *I Am Not Your Negro* to his upcoming work *Exterminate All the Brutes*, which interrogates over 600 years of history, from the Native American genocide to the systemized enslavement of Africans, to

Hitlerâ??s extermination of the European Jewsâ??a history to which our present is inextricably bound; and, legal scholar and civil rights advocate KimberlÃ© W. Crenshaw moderates **The Story of Us**, with Bryan Stevenson, founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative and Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Viá»?t Thanh Nguyá» n, about the construction, dissemination, and deployment of the grand narrative of the United States, and the critical role of independent media in its retelling.

All talks and events are free to view globally. To access, youâ??ll need to sign up for an account at Festival.Sundance.org, or log on to your existing Festival account. To find opportunities of what to look for in the days ahead, check out Talks & Events, Artist Lounge, and Main Street. In addition, as the Festival events are so numerous, for the next five days Sundance will be sending out an email each day with a preview of the next dayâ??s free event schedule. Iâ??m telling you if youâ??ve never been to a Sundance Film Festival, this is one to see! And tell â??em, Larry sent you!



Larry Gleeson reporting from the 2020 Sundance Film Festival in Park City Utah, January 24th, 2020. (Photo credit: HollywoodGlee)

Until next time, I look forward to seeing you at the movies or in New Frontiers â?? whichever comes first!

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



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hollywoodglee