

Eight Indigenous-Made Films to See at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

This year, eight Indigenous-made films from Australia, New Zealand, and the United States will be premiering at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. The Native American and Indigenous Film Program has a global focus and through its work strengthens Indigenous cinema.

Filmmakers supported over the years include Sterlin Harjo (Seminole/Muskogee), Taika Waititi (Te WhÄ•nau-Ä•-Apanui), Billy Luther (DinÃ©/Hopi/Laguna Pueblo), Andrew Okpeaha MacLean (IÃ±upiaq), Aurora Guerrero (Xicana), Sydney Freeland (DinÃ©), Ciara Leinaâ??ala Lacy (Kanaka Maoli), Lyle Mitchell Corbine, Jr. (Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians), Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk/Pechanga), and Shaandiin Tome (DinÃ©).

Following President and Founder Robert Redfordâ??s original vision, Sundance Institute has remained committed to supporting Native American artists throughout the Instituteâ??s history. This support has established a rich legacy of work and has supported more than 300 filmmakers through labs, grants, mentorships, public programs, and the platform of the Sundance Film Festival.

FEATURE FILMS

PREMIERES

Top End Wedding / Australia **(Director: Wayne Blair (Batjala Mununjali Wakkawakka)**, Screenwriters: Joshua Tyler, Miranda Tapsell (Larrakia Nation), Producers: Rosemary Blight, Kylie du Fresne, Kate Croser) â?? Lauren and Ned are engaged, they are in love, and they have just ten days to find Laurenâ??s mother who has gone AWOL somewhere in the remote far north of Australia, reunite her parents and pull off their dream wedding. Cast: Miranda Tapsell, Gwilym Lee, Kerry Fox, Huw

Higginson, Ursula Yovich, Shari Sebbens. World Premiere

DOCUMENTARY PREMIERES



MERATA: How Mum Decolonised The Screen / New Zealand (**Director and screenwriter: Hepi Mita (Ngati Pikiao/Ngai te Rangi)**, Producer: Chelsea Winstanley) â?? An intimate portrayal of pioneering filmmaker Merata Mita, told through the eyes of her children. Using hours of archive footage, some never before seen, her youngest child discovers the filmmaker he never knew and shares with the world the mother he lost. International Premiere



Words from a Bear / U.S.A. **(Director: Jeffrey Palmer (Kiowa), Producer: Jeffrey Palmer (Kiowa)** â?? A visual journey into the mind and soul of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Navarro Scott Momaday, relating each written line to his unique Native American experience representing ancestry, place and oral history. World Premiere

SHORT FILMS

U.S. NARRATIVE SHORT FILMS



Fainting Spells / U.S.A. **(Director and screenwriter: Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk/Pechanga Band of LuiseÃ±o)** â?? Told through recollections of youth, learning, lore, and departure, this is an imagined myth for the Indian Pipe Plant, used by the Ho-Chunk to revive those who have fainted. Premiere



Shinaab, Part II / U.S.A. **(Director and screenwriter: Lyle Corbine Jr. (Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Band of Chippewa Indians)** â?? A look at Ojibwe ideas surrounding the death process, as a young man strives to honor his late father. U.S. Premiere

DOCUMENTARY SHORT FILMS



Fast Horse

FAST HORSE / Canada **(Director and screenwriter: Alexandra Lazarowich (Cree)** â?? The Blackfoot bareback horse-racing tradition returns in the astonishingly dangerous Indian Relay. Siksika horseman Allison Red Crow struggles with second-hand horses and a new jockey on his way to challenge the best riders in the Blackfoot Confederacy. U.S. Premiere



Throat Singing in Kangirsuk / Canada **(Directors: Eva Kaukai (Inuit), Manon Chamberland (Inuit), Screenwriters: Emilie Baillargeon and Clark Ferguson)** â?? Eva and Manon practice the art of throat singing in their native Arctic land, in the small village of Kangirsuk. World Premiere

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE SHORT FILMS



Birds in the Earth / Finland **(Director and screenwriter: Marja Helander, SÃ¡mi) â??** Examining the deeper questions of the ownership of SÃ¡mi land through the ballet performances of two young dancers.

FELLOWS

Native Filmmaker Lab Fellows

Two Fellows participated in the Native Filmmakers Lab with their projects in May 2018 and will end their year-long Fellowship at the Festival with ongoing support, screenings, guided film discussions, and networking events. At the Lab, the Fellows worked with a cast and crew to practice shooting scenes from their short films under the expert creative mentorship of Program alumni, Creative Advisors and

Program staff. This Fellowship encourages Native filmmakers to hone their storytelling and technical skills in a hands-on and supportive environment. Following the Lab, Fellows receive a year-round continuum of support.

Erica Tremblay

Erica (Seneca-Cayuga/Wyandotte Nations) is an award-winning filmmaker and digital strategist. Her projects have screened at more than 60 film festivals and her work has been featured on PBS, CNN and IFC. Erica was recently named a 40 Under 40 Native American and she is currently studying her Indigenous language on the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve in Ontario.

Little Chief

The lives of a Native woman and nine-year-old boy intersect over the course of a school day on a reservation in Oklahoma.

MorningStar Angeline Wilson

MorningStar Angeline (Navajo, Blackfeet, Chippewa Cree, Latina) was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She began acting in theatre as a child and continued studying acting through college. She has been honored by the American Indian Film Festival and the New Mexico Film and Television Hall of Fame for her achievements in film. She is one of 2018 Native Lab recipients and her short film, *AhÃ©heeâ?? ShizhÃ©â??Ã©*, completed production in August.

AhÃ©heeâ?? ShizhÃ©â??Ã© (Thank you, Father)

A young woman struggles to come to terms with the legacy left to her after her father passes away from an unknown virus in a post-apocalyptic world. Through a series of dreams, she finds the strength to carry the traditions and medicine that was left to her.

Indigenous Film Fellows

Danis Goulet (Cree/MÃ©tis)

Award-winning filmmaker Danis Gouletâ??s films have screened at festivals around the world including Sundance, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) and the Berlinale. She is an alumnus of the National Screen Institute and the TIFF Talent lab and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Her feature script Night Raiders has received development support from the Sundance Institute and was selected for the International Financing Forum at TIFF.

Night Raiders

The near future. A military occupation controls disenfranchised cities in post-war North America. Children are property of the State. Niska, a Cree mother, is on the run with her daughter Waseece to keep her from being sent to the Stateâ??s education camps, known as the Academies. When they are forced to leave their home, Niska makes the painstaking decision to send Waseece to Academies, only to later realize she has made a terrible mistake. Niska finds an underground band of Cree vigilantes who raid the Academies at night. She joins the raiders, determined to find and get her daughter back.

Miciana Hutcherson (Tlingit)

Miciana Hutcherson, whose Tlingit name is Aakâ??w Tu Shaa, is Raven Dog Salmon, with family from Angoon, Alaska. She was born and raised in Juneau, Alaska where she was a member of the All Nations Children Dance Group and graduated from Juneau Douglas High School. Miciana is a graduate of Haskell Indian Nations University where she earned her bachelorâ??s degree in Indigenous and American Indian Studies. Currently, sheâ??s pursuing a second degree in Film and Media Studies from Arizona State University. She has interned with various media companies and organizations ranging from the Native American Journalists Association, to the BET Awards with Jessie Collins Entertainment, to the Sundance Institute. She also served as Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska 2016-2017 Executive Council Emerging Leader where she attended various tribal leadership conferences and the peaceful protests at Standing Rock.

Marked By Milestones

In this life a womanâ??s biggest challenges are the love she chooses to accept, the tough love her mother offers, and the lack of love a father leaves behind. Mia will have to face them all to find herself.

Art of Nonfiction Fellow

The Art of Nonfiction Fellowship supports artists with a distinct voice and vision and provides them with an unrestricted grant and year-long fellowship track tailored to their creative aspirations and challenges. Art of Nonfiction is made possible by funding support from Cinereach. Generous additional support is provided by Genuine Article Pictures and Nion McEvoy & Leslie Berriman.

Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk/Pechanga Band of LuiseÃ±o)

Sky Hopinka was born and raised in Ferndale, Washington and spent a number of years in Palm Springs and Riverside, California, Portland, Oregon, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is currently based out of Cambridge, Massachusetts. In Portland he studied and taught chinuk wawa, a language indigenous to the Lower Columbia River Basin. His video work centers around personal positions of Indigenous homeland and landscape, designs of language as containers of culture, and the play between the known and the unknowable. His work has played at various festivals including ImagineNATIVE Media + Arts Festival, Images, Wavelengths, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Sundance, Antimatter, Chicago Underground Film Festival, FLEXfest, and Projections. His work was a part of the 2016 Wisconsin Triennial and the 2017 Whitney Biennial. He is currently a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

Talent Forum

For the first time, this yearâ??s Festival will include a Forum for exciting talent from the Instituteâ??s signature artist development Labs and programs to present new work to industry attendees, alongside a special artist-only program of keynotes, screenings, gatherings, and seminars. From Tuesday, January 29, through Thursday, January 31, the Sundance Institute Talent Forum will feature some of the most promising storytellers from across the Instituteâ??s various disciplines ready for the next step with their careers or projects. This new, highly curated, invitation-only program aims to create a signature experience for artists and industry alike.

Lyle Mitchell Corbine Jr., Writer/Director (Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

Lyle Mitchell Corbine Jr. is a filmmaker whose short film *Shinaab* played at the Sundance Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival and AFI Fest. His follow-up short, *Shinaab: Part II,* premiered at the 2018 Toronto International Film Festival and will screen at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. He was supported at the 2018 Sundance Institute Screenwriters and Directors Labs and has been awarded grants and fellowships from Cinereach, the McKnight Foundation and the Time Warner Foundation.

Blake Pickens, Producer (Chickasaw)

Blake Pickens is an Emmy Award-winning Chickasaw filmmaker. Pickens began his career writing satire for *National Lampoon*. He was selected for the Sundance Institute Indigenous Producers Fellowship and the Sundance Institute Creative Producing Fellowship. His film *The Land* premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and was released theatrically by IFC Films. His commercials have won multiple Grands Prix at Cannes Lions, and he also won an MTV VMA for his work on the music video for John Legendâ??s â??Surefire.â?•

Merata Mita Fellowship

On Monday, January 28, Sundance Institute will announce the recipient of an annual fellowship named in honor of the late MÄ•ori filmmaker Merata Mita, New Zealandâ??s first Indigenous female filmmaker. In addition to being a global advocate for Indigenous voices, Merata was a trusted creative advisor and artistic director at the Native Lab, and a dear friend to the Institute. Each year Sundance Institute identifies a Native or Indigenous filmmaker from a global pool of nominees to award a cash grant and provide a year-long continuum of support with activities including a trip to the Sundance Film Festival, access to strategic and creative services offered by Sundance Institute artist programs, and mentorship opportunities. The Merata Mita Fellowship is supported by the Consulate General of Canada, Indigenous Media Initiatives, Anonymous, Fenton Bailey and Billy Luther, and Sarah Luther.



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1. #Sundance

2. Sundance
3. Sundance Film Festival

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