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**FILM INDEPENDENT ANNOUNCES AWARD WINNERS
OF 2009 LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL**

NEW TARGET DREAM IN COLOR AWARD ESTABLISHED

**Sam Fleischner & Ben Chace's *Wah Do Dem (What They Do)* wins
Target Filmmaker Award**

**Juan Carlos Rulfo & Carlos Hagerman's *Those Who Remain* wins
Target Documentary Award**

LOS ANGELES (June 28, 2009) – Today Film Independent, the non-profit arts organization that produces the Spirit Awards and the Los Angeles Film Festival, announced its 2009 Los Angeles Film Festival award winners at a special event, presented by Target. The Los Angeles Film Festival, presented by *The Los Angeles Times*, ran from Thursday, June 18 to Sunday, June 28.

“One of our goals at Film Independent is to help filmmakers build an audience for their work, and the Los Angeles Film Festival does just that,” said Film Independent Executive Director Dawn Hudson. “We hope recognition at the Festival will allow these filmmakers to continue to find broad audiences for their terrific films.”

The two top juried awards of the Los Angeles Film Festival are the **Target Filmmaker Award** and **Target Documentary Award**, each carrying an unrestricted **\$50,000 cash prize** for the winning film's director. The awards were established by the Festival and Target to encourage independent filmmakers to pursue their artistic ambitions.

“Target has been a major supporter of the Festival since 2001, and their partnership has allowed us to expand dramatically in that time,” said Festival Director Rebecca Yeldham. “Their specific dedication to individual artists is extraordinary.”

The **Target Filmmaker Award** recognizes the finest narrative film in competition at the Festival and went to **Sam Fleischner** and **Ben Chace** for *Wah Do Dem (What They Do)*. The **Target Documentary Award** recognizes the finest documentary film in competition at the Festival and went to **Juan Carlos Rulfo** and **Carlos Hagerman** for *Those Who Remain (Los Que se Quedan)*.

New this year, the Festival and Target established the **Target Dream in Color Award** to recognize a short film in the Festival's Future Filmmaker Showcase for high school students that inspires audiences to dream without boundaries and share culture in a unique and positive way. The prize includes a Target Gift card for the winning director and a desktop editing system for the winner's school media arts program. The **Target Dream in Color Award** was presented by Elizabeth Pena and given to **Sam Rubin** for *Lipstick*.

The **Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature** went to *The Stoning of Soraya M.*, directed by **Cyrus Nowrasteh** and the **Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature** went to *Soul Power*, directed by **Jeffrey Levy-Hinte**. **Eva Norvind's *Born Without (Nacido Sin)*** won the **Audience Award for Best International Feature**.

The award for **Outstanding Performance in the Narrative Competition** went to **Shayne Topp** for his performance in **Suzi Yoonessi's *Dear Lemon Lima***. Given to an actor or actors from an official selection in the Narrative Competition, this is the sixth year the award has been given at the Festival.

The award for **Best Narrative Short Film** went to **Antonio Mendez Esparza's *Time and Again***. The award for **Best Documentary Short Film** went to **Anna Gaskell's *Replayground***. **Jérémy Clapin's *Skhizein*** won the award for **Best Animated Short Film**.

The **Audience Award for Best Short Film** went to *Instead of Abracadabra*, directed by **Patrick Eklund**. *Grapevine Fires*, directed by **Walter Robot** won the **Audience Award for Best Music Video** for **Death Cab for Cutie**.

The Narrative Feature Competition jury was comprised of producer Albert Berger, actress Rosemarie DeWitt, and film critic Elvis Mitchell. The Documentary Feature Competition jury was comprised of film critic David Ansen, writer-director Anna Boden, and director Darius Marder. The Shorts Competition jury was comprised of art director KK Barrett, producer Tracey Bing, and digital media artist and filmmaker Alex Rivera. The Target Dream in Color jury was comprised of director Patricia Cardoso, the writing and directing team Jennifer Flackett and Mark Levin, and director Mark Osborne.

The 2009 Los Angeles Film Festival screened over 200 feature films, shorts, and music videos, representing more than 30 countries. This year, the Festival received more than 4,600 submissions from filmmakers around the world, with the final selections representing several World, International, North American, and U.S. premieres. For the first time this year, international films were included in the narrative and documentary competition categories.

The Festival kicked off on Thursday, June 18 with the **Opening Night Gala** selection and **World Premiere** of *Paper Man*, directed by Michele Mulroney and Kieran Mulroney. *Public Enemies*, directed by Michael Mann, screened as this year's **Centerpiece Premiere** selection on Tuesday, June 23. The **Closing Night** film selection was Disney's *Ponyo*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki.

In addition to the Festival's Coffee Talks, Tech Talks, Poolside Chats, Film Financing Conference, and other special events, the Festival held the Los Angeles Premiere of DreamWorks Pictures and Paramount Pictures' *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.

Khaled Hosseini and **Thom Mayne** served as this year's **Artists in Residence**. As Artists in Residence, each programmed an event that inspired their work. Khaled Hosseini selected Cyrus Nowrasteh's *The Stoning of Soraya M.*, followed by a panel discussion, and Thom Mayne engaged in a fascinating discussion with acclaimed cinematographer Frederick Elmes about architecture and cinema.

Awards were given out in the following categories:

Target Filmmaker Award (for Best Narrative Feature)

Winner: *Wah Do Dem (What They Do)* written and directed by **Sam Fleischner & Ben Chace**
Producers: Sam Fleischner, Katina Hubbard, Ben Chace, Martha Lapham, Henry Kasdon
Cast: Sean Bones, Norah Jones, Kevin Bewersdorf, Carl Bradshaw
Film Description: Max's dream Caribbean cruise becomes a solitary odyssey after his girlfriend

dumps him days before their departure. Now, he'll have to go with the Jamaican flow in this disarming and incisive debut feature.

The Target Filmmaker Award carries an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000 funded by Target, offering the financial means to help filmmakers transfer their vision to the screen. The award recognizes the finest narrative film in competition, and is given to the director. A special jury selects the winner, and all narrative feature-length films screening in the Narrative Competition section were eligible.

In bestowing Sam Fleischner and Ben Chace with the Target Filmmaker Award, the Jury stated: "A film that could feel anecdotal but through its musical shifts and tone, and its vision of the world as a newly optimistic place, *Wah Do Dem (What They Do)* creates a strong and profound emotional narrative."

Target Documentary Award (for Best Documentary Feature)

Winner: *Those Who Remain (Los Que se Quedan)* directed by Juan Carlos Rulfo and Carlos Hagerman
Producers: Juan Carlos Rulfo, Carlos Hagerman, Martha Sosa Elizondo, Nicolas Vale
Film Description: (Mexico) This intimate and discerning depiction of the impact of migration on families left behind by loved ones who travel north emerges as a nuanced portrait of "the other side" of the immigration story.

The Target Documentary Award carries an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000 funded by Target, offering the financial means to help filmmakers transfer their vision to the screen. The award recognizes the finest documentary film in competition, and is given to the director. A special jury selects the winner, and all documentary feature-length films screening in the Documentary Competition section were eligible.

In bestowing Juan Carlos Rulfo and Carlos Hagerman with the Target Documentary Award, the Jury stated: "With its generosity of spirit and lyrical grace that illuminates a human landscape with fresh eyes, *Those Who Remain* reminds us that documentaries can be both journalism and poetry."

Target Dream in Color Award (for Best Short in the Future Filmmaker Showcase)

Winner: *Lipstick* directed by Sam Rubin
Producer: The Film Workshop of SF Art & Film
Cast: Sam Rubin
Film Description: A boy locks himself in a bathroom. His mother wants to know if he is OK.

The **Target Dream in Color Award** was given to **Sam Rubin** for *Lipstick* and recognizes a film that inspires audiences to dream without boundaries and share culture in a unique and positive way. This award is the first time a cash grant was given to a participant in the Los Angeles Film Festival's Future Filmmaker Showcase, a short film program targeted to young and talented emerging filmmakers in high school.

In bestowing Sam Rubin with the Target Dream in Color Award, the Jury stated: "We congratulate all the filmmakers on their extraordinary work. While we were impressed with the scope and diversity of all the high school shorts, we select *Lipstick*, a simple and powerful film, which can inspire other future filmmakers to make movies with very little. Using just two props, one location, and two actors, the filmmaker creates a compelling story about a character dealing with personal yet universal issues of identity and communication. It is a visual film with a strong point of view. In *Lipstick*, we see both a present and future filmmaker."

Outstanding Performance in the Narrative Competition

Winner: Shayne Topp in **Suzi Yoonessi's *Dear Lemon Lima*,**

Film Description: "As sweet and colorful as a snow cone, this delightful happy-sad confection follows an awkward Alaskan teen as she discovers her Yup'ik heritage while rallying her fellow misfits to compete in her school's Snow-storm Survivor competition."

In bestowing Shayne Topp with Outstanding Performance recognition, the Jury stated: "For his sophisticated and nuanced comic performance in a role that is often played in less subtle ways by more experienced actors, the award goes to Shayne Topp from *Dear Lemon Lima*."

Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature

Winner: ***The Stoning of Soraya M.* written by Betsy Giffen Nowrasteh and Cyrus Nowrasteh and directed by Cyrus Nowrasteh**

Producers: Stephen McEveety, John Shepherd

Cast: Shohreh Aghdashloo, Mozhan Marnò, Jim Caviezel

Film Description: Based on Freidoune Sahebjam's international bestseller, this visceral drama, which tells the true story of a tragic incident of oppression, conspiracy and betrayal, gathers tension and outrage as it builds to its inevitable conclusion.

This award is given to the narrative feature audiences liked most as voted by a tabulated rating system. Select narrative feature-length films screening in the following sections were eligible for the Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature: Narrative Competition, International Showcase, International Spotlight, Summer Showcase, Outdoor Screenings at the Ford Amphitheatre, Dark Wave, Guilty Pleasures, and Special Screenings.

Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature

Winner: ***Soul Power* directed by Jeffrey Levy-Hinte**

Producers: Leon Gast, Jeffrey Levy-Hinte, David Sonenberg

Featuring: James Brown, Bill Withers, B.B. King, The Spinners, Celia Cruz and the Fania All-Stars, Muhammad Ali, Don King, Stewart Levine

Film Description: This blazing concert film documents "Zaire '74," the sister event to the famed Ali/Foreman "Rumbling in the Jungle," featuring previously unseen performances by James Brown, B.B. King, Bill Withers, Celia Cruz and others.

This award is given to the documentary feature audiences liked most as voted on by a tabulated rating system. Select documentary feature-length films screening in the following sections were eligible for the Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature: Documentary Competition, International Showcase, International Spotlight, Summer Showcase, Outdoor Screenings at the Ford Amphitheatre, and Special Screenings.

Audience Award for Best International Feature

Winner: ***Born Without (Nacido Sin)* written & directed by Eva Norvind**

Producers: Eva Norvind, Nailea Norvind, Donald K. Ranvaud

Featuring: José Flores, Graciela Flores, Alejandro Jodorowsky
Film Description: (Mexico) A remarkably frank portrait of the lives and loves of José Flores – a street musician, actor, father of six, and Romeo who was born without arms and stands only three feet tall.

This award is given to the international feature audiences liked most as voted on by a tabulated rating system. Select international feature-length films, both narrative and documentary, in the Narrative Competition, Documentary Competition, International Showcase, International Spotlight, Summer Showcase, Outdoor Screenings at the Ford Amphitheatre, Dark Wave, and Special Screenings were eligible for the Audience Award for Best International Feature.

Best Narrative Short Film

Winner: *Time and Again* written & directed by Antonio Mendez Esparza
Producers: Florin Serban, Diana Wade
Cast: Pedro Santos, Erica Heras
Description: Pedro's dreams about his future are challenged by an unforeseen turn of events.

In bestowing Antonio Mendez Esparza with Best Narrative Short Film, the Jury stated:
"For its raw and atmospheric visual palette, bold use of real and rarely seen locations, and cast which brought a refreshing realism, the award goes to *Time and Again*, an ambitious portrait of an immigrant's struggle to find love in a new land."

Best Documentary Short Film

Winner: *Replayground* by Anna Gaskell
Producers: Anna Gaskell
Featuring: Brookti Berne, Harris Rosenberg, James Gray
Description: Roles are reversed in this hilarious reenactment of a children's quarrel.

In bestowing Anna Gaskell with Best Documentary Short Film, the Jury stated:
"The award goes to *Replayground*. The concept was so fresh and unexpected in its use of children's visions of their playground actions as content for a play that they would then be entrusted to cast and direct. A case of a brilliant premise carrying a film."

Best Animated Short Film

Winner: *Skhizein* by Jérémy Clapin
Producers: Wendy Griffiths, Stéphane Piera
Cast: Julien Boisseller, Theo Grimmelsen, Mado Debrus
Description: (France) After a 150-ton meteorite strikes, Henry's physical existence is forever altered.

In bestowing Jérémy Clapin with Best Animated Short Film, the Jury stated:
"The award goes to *Skhizein*, for its use of animation to tell a story no other medium could, that of a character who finds himself literally beside himself, creating an elegant interlocking of story animation and character."

Audience Award for Best Short Film

Winner: *Instead of Abracadabra* by Patrick Eklund
Producer: Mathias Fjellström
Cast: Simon J. Berger, Jacob Nordenson, Anki Larsson, Saga Gärde
Description: Tomas attempts to impress his family and the beautiful Monica with his dazzling feats of magic.

Awarded to the short film audiences liked most as voted on by a tabulated rating system. Short films screening in the Shorts Programs or before Narrative Competition, Documentary Competition, or International Showcase feature-length screenings were eligible for the Audience Award for Best Short Film.

Audience Award for Best Music Video

Winner: *Grapevine Fires* by Walter Robot
Music: Death Cab For Cutie
Description: When a wildfire rages through a small suburb, a boy must save his older brother, and in the process finds what is really important in life.

This award is given to the music video audiences liked most as voted on by a tabulated rating system.

To download images and clips from the winning films, please visit www.image.net and search 2009 Los Angeles Film Festival. If you do not have an account, please use referral code 1020.

ABOUT THE 2009 LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL

Now in its fifteenth year, the Los Angeles Film Festival is widely recognized as a world-class event, showcasing the best in new American and international cinema and providing the movie-loving public with access to some of the most critically acclaimed filmmakers, film industry professionals, and emerging talent from around the world.

The Festival features unique signature programs including the Filmmaker Retreat, Film Financing Conference, Ford Amphitheatre Outdoor Screenings, Poolside Chats at the W Los Angeles – Westwood Hotel, and more. Additionally, the Festival screens short films created by high school students and has a special section devoted to music videos.

More than 70 features, 70 shorts, and 50 music videos, representing more than 30 countries, make up the main body of the Festival.

Awards are given out in the following categories at the conclusion of the Festival: Target Filmmaker Award for Best Narrative Feature with an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000 funded by Target; Target Documentary Award with an unrestricted cash prize of \$50,000 funded by Target; Outstanding Performance in the Narrative Competition; Best Narrative Short Film; Best Documentary Short Film; Best Animated/Experimental Short Film; and Audience Awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary Feature, Best International Feature, Best Music Video, and Best Short Film.

The Los Angeles Film Festival is presented by the Los Angeles Times and is supported by Premier Sponsors Target and ZonePerfect® Nutrition Bars and Principal Sponsors Kodak, IFC, and Netflix. Special support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. American Airlines is the Official Airline Partner, WireImage is the Official Photography Agency of Film Independent, and W Los Angeles – Westwood Hotel and the Hotel Palomar are the Official Hotel Partners of the Festival.

ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT

Film Independent is a non-profit arts organization that champions independent film and supports a community of artists who embody diversity, innovation, and uniqueness of vision. Film Independent helps filmmakers make their movies, builds an audience for their projects, and works to diversify the film industry. Film Independent's Board of Directors, filmmakers, staff, and constituents, is comprised of an inclusive community of individuals across ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexual orientation. Anyone passionate about film can become a member, whether you are a filmmaker, industry leader, or a film lover.

With over 250 annual screenings and events, Film Independent provides access to a network of like-minded artists who are driving creativity in the film industry. Film Independent offers free Filmmaker Labs for selected writers, directors, and producers; provides cut-rate services for filmmakers; and presents year-round networking opportunities. Film Independent's mentorship and job placement program, Project:Involve, pairs emerging culturally diverse filmmakers with film industry professionals.

Film Independent produces the Los Angeles Film Festival and the Spirit Awards. For more information or to become a member, visit FilmIndependent.org.

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