

# SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL



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## 2009 SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FILMS IN THE PREMIERES, SPECTRUM, NEW FRONTIER AND PARK CITY AT MIDNIGHT SECTIONS

**MARY AND MAX** From First-Time Feature Director Adam Elliot  
to Open 25th Festival January 15 in Park City, Utah

Park City, UT—Sundance Institute announced today the lineup of films screening at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival in the out-of-competition sections of Premieres, Spectrum, New Frontier, and Park City at Midnight. Celebrating its 25th year, the 2009 Sundance Film Festival runs January 15-25 in Park City, Salt Lake City, Ogden, and Sundance, Utah. A complete list of the films is available at Sundance Institute's website at [Sundance Festival 2009](http://www.sundance.org).

As previously announced, the Festival opens on January 15 in Park City with the world premiere of **Mary and Max**, a clay animation feature film from Academy Award-winning short film creators Adam Elliot and producer Melanie Coombs. Starring Philip Seymour Hoffman and Toni Collette and narrated by Barry Humphries, **Mary and Max** is the tale of two unlikely pen pals: Mary, a lonely, eight-year-old girl living in the suburbs of Melbourne, and Max, a forty-four-year old, severely obese man living in New York. The story is based on the director's own pen-friendship that has also lasted over twenty years.

The screening of the Closing Film on January 23, the second Friday of the Film Festival, will signal the start of the final weekend. This year's Closing Film is the world premiere of **Earth Days**, a history of our environmental undoing seen through the eyes of nine Americans whose work and actions launched the modern environmental movement. The Salt Lake City Gala on Friday, January 16 will feature the world premiere of **The September Issue**, screening in Documentary Competition. With unprecedented access, director R.J. Cutler and his crew shot for nine months to capture *Vogue* editor in chief Anna Wintour and her team preparing the 2007 *Vogue* September issue, widely accepted as the "fashion bible" for the year's trends.

"Whether personal reflective pieces or larger films with established talent, the films screening out of competition have enormous possibility for success down the line," said Geoffrey Gilmore, Director, Sundance Film Festival. "Across all the categories there are some truly excellent films in this year's Festival."

Added John Cooper, Director of Programming, Sundance Film Festival, "Discovery is key to understanding this year's slate of films. There are some terrific acting ensemble works in Premieres section and I am counting on some surprise commercial interest in Midnight and Spectrum this year."

### PREMIERES

To showcase the diversity of contemporary independent cinema, the Sundance Film Festival Premieres section offers the latest work from American and international directors and world premieres of highly anticipated films.

Films screening in Premieres are:

**500 Days of Summer** / USA. (Director: Marc Webb; Screenwriters: Scott Neustadter, Michael H. Weber)—When an unlucky greeting card copywriter is dumped by his girlfriend, the hopeless romantic shifts back and forth through various periods of their 500 days 'together' in hopes of figuring out where things went wrong. *Cast: Zooey Deschanel, Joseph Gordon-Levitt. World Premiere*

**Adventureland** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Greg Mottola)—In 1987, a recent college graduate takes a nowhere job at his local amusement park and discovers the job is perfect preparation for the real world. *Cast: Kristen Stewart, Ryan Reynolds, Bill Hader. World Premiere*

**Brooklyn's Finest** / USA (Director: Antoine Fuqua; Screenwriter: Michael C. Martin)—After enduring vastly different career paths, three unconnected Brooklyn cops wind up at the same deadly location. *Cast: Richard Gere, Ethan Hawke, Wesley Snipes, Don Cheadle, Ellen Barkin. World Premiere*

**Earth Days** / USA (Director: Robert Stone)—The history of our environmental undoing through the eyes of nine Americans whose work and actions launched the modern environmental movement. *World Premiere. Closing Night Film*

**Endgame** / UK (Director: Pete Travis; Screenwriter: Paula Milne)—A political thriller in which a businessman initiates covert discussions between the African National Congress and white intellectuals to try and find a peaceful solution to the Apartheid regime. *Cast: William Hurt, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Jonny Lee Miller, Mark Strong. World Premiere*

**I Love You Philip Morris** / USA (Directors and Screenwriters: Glenn Ficarra and John Requa)—The true story about con artist and imposter Steven Jay Russell, a married father whose exploits land him in the Texas criminal justice system. Based on the novel by *Houston Chronicle* crime reporter Steve McVicker. *Cast: Jim Carrey, Ewan McGregor, Leslie Mann, Rodrigo Santoro. World Premiere*

**The Informers** / USA (Director: Gregor Jordan; Screenwriters: Bret Easton Ellis and Nicholas Jarecki)—A drama based on Bret Easton Ellis' novel, set in the 1980s, focusing on wealthy Angelinos consumed by a decadent lifestyle. *Cast: Billy Bob Thornton, Kim Basinger, Winona Ryder, Mickey Rourke. North American Premiere*

**In the Loop** / UK (Director: Armando Iannucci; Screenwriters: Armando Iannucci and Jesse Armstrong)—A fast-paced film about Britain and America's special relationship in the lead-up to a war no one seems to be able to stop. *Cast: Peter Capaldi, James Gandolfini, Tom Hollander. World Premiere*

**Manure** / USA (Director: Michael Polish; Screenwriters: Mark Polish and Michael Polish)—A comic tale centered on manure salesmen in the early 1960s. *Cast: Téa Leoni, Billy Bob Thornton, Kyle MacLachlan. World Premiere*

**Mary and Max** / Australia (Director and Screenwriter: Adam Elliot)—The tale of two unlikely pen pals: Mary, a lonely, eight-year-old girl living in the suburbs of Melbourne, and Max, a forty-four-year old, severely obese man living in New York. *Cast: Philip Seymour Hoffman (voice), Toni Collette (voice), Barry Humphries (voice). World Premiere, Opening Night Film*

**The Messenger** / USA (Director: Oren Moverman; Screenwriters: Alessandro Camon and Oren Moverman)—Two soldiers from different generations form a unique bond as they cope with their assignment with the Army Casualty Notification department. *Cast: Ben Foster, Woody Harrelson, Samantha Morton, Jena Malone, Eamonn Walker. World Premiere*

**Moon** / UK (Director: Duncan Jones; Screenwriter: Nathan Parker)—Before returning to Earth after three years on the moon, things go horribly wrong for astronaut Sam Bell. *Cast: Sam Rockwell, Kevin Spacey. World Premiere*

**Motherhood** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Katherine Dieckmann)—A mother of two from Manhattan is having a day that would challenge even the toughest maternal multi-tasker. *Cast: Uma Thurman, Minnie Driver, Anthony Edwards. World Premiere*

**Rudo and Cursi (Rudo y Cursi)** / Mexico (Director and Screenwriter: Carlos Cuarón)—Two siblings rival each other inside the world of professional soccer. *Cast: Diego Luna, Gael García Bernal, Guillermo Francella. U.S. Premiere*

**Shrink** / USA (Director: Jonas Pate; Screenwriter: Thomas Moffett)—Unable to come to grips with a recent personal tragedy, Los Angeles' top celebrity psychiatrist loses faith in his ability to help his patients. *Cast: Kevin Spacey, Keke Palmer, Mark Webber, Dallas Roberts, Saffron Burrows. World Premiere*

**Spread** / USA (Director: David Mackenzie; Screenwriter: Jason Dean Hall)—A handsome young man survives in Los Angeles by seducing wealthy older women. *Cast: Ashton Kutcher, Anne Heche. World Premiere*

## SPECTRUM

A tribute to the abundance of compelling new voices and the creative spirit in independent filmmaking, the Spectrum program presents out-of-competition dramatic and documentary films from some of the most promising filmmakers in the world today.

Dramatic films screening in Spectrum are:

**Against the Current** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Peter Callahan)—Facing the anniversary of his pregnant wife's tragic death, thirty-five-year old Paul Thompson enlists the help of two friends to help him swim the length of the Hudson River. *Cast: Joseph Fiennes, Justin Kirk, Elizabeth Reaser, Mary Tyler Moore, Michelle Trachtenberg. World Premiere*

**The Anarchist's Wife (La Mujer del Anarquista)** / Germany/Spain (Directors: Marie Noelle and Peter Sehr; Screenwriters: Marie Noelle and Ray Loriga)—During the Spanish Civil War an idealistic young lawyer combating Franco's Fascist troops is separated from his wife and children. *Cast: Maria Valverde, Juan Diego Botto, Nina Hoss, Ivana Baquero, Jean-Marc Barr. North American Premiere*

**Barking Water** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Sterlin Harjo)—Irene and Frankie have had a tumultuous relationship for forty years. As Frankie lies on his deathbed, Irene comes back to him one last time to break him from the hospital and take him home. *Cast: Richard Ray Whitman, Casey Camp-Horenik. World Premiere*

**Children of Invention** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Tze Chun)—Two young children are left to fend for themselves when their mother is arrested for unwittingly taking part in an illegal pyramid scheme. *Cast: Cindy Cheung, Michael Chen, Crystal Chiu. World Premiere*

**Everything Strange and New** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Frazer Bradshaw)—Trapped by a life he never intended, a man struggles to navigate family, sexuality and drug addiction. *Cast: Jerry McDaniel, Beth Lisick, Rigo Chacon Jr., Luis Saguar. World Premiere*

**Helen** / Canada/Germany (Director and Screenwriter: Sandra Nettelbeck)—A successful psychiatrist fights her own clinical depression. *Cast: Ashley Judd, Goran Visnjic. World Premiere*

***The Immaculate Conception of Little Dizzle*** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: David Russo)—After losing his high-paying job, Dory takes a gig as a night janitor in order to pay rent. Alone late at night inside a market research firm, he discovers something worse than his new job cleaning toilets - a conniving corporate executive has made him the subject of a bizarre experiment. *Cast: Marshall Allman, Vince Vieluf, Natasha Lyonne, Tania Raymonde, Tygh Runyan. World Premiere*

***Johnny Mad Dog*** / France (Director: Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire; Screenwriters: Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire and Jacques Fieschi)—A fifteen-year-old kid-soldier fighting in Africa is armed to the hilt and inhabited by the mad dog he dreams of becoming. *Cast: Christophe Minie, Daisy Victoria Vandy. North American Premiere*

***La Mission*** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Peter Bratt)—A traditional, Latino father in San Francisco's Mission District struggles to come to terms with his teenage son's homosexuality. *Cast: Benjamin Bratt, Erika Alexander, Jeremy Ray Valdez, Talisa Soto Bratt, Jesse Borrego. World Premiere*

***Lymelife*** / USA. (Director: Derick Martini; Screenwriters: Derick Martini and Steven Martini)—Set in the 1970s, a unique take on the dangers of the American dream seen through the innocent eyes of a fifteen-year-old boy. *Cast: Alec Baldwin, Kieran Culkin, Timothy Hutton, Cynthia Nixon, Emma Roberts. U.S. Premiere*

***The Missing Person*** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Noah Buschel)—Private detective John Rosow is hired to tail a man on a train from Chicago to Los Angeles. En route, Rosow uncovers that the man's identity is one of the thousands presumed dead after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. *Cast: Michael Shannon, Amy Ryan, Frank Wood. World Premiere*

***Once More with Feeling*** / USA (Director: Jeff Lipsky; Screenwriter: Gina O'Brien)—A comedy about a psychiatrist who undergoes a midlife crisis and pursues his long-lost ambition of becoming a singer through karaoke. *Cast: Drea de Matteo, Linda Fiorentino, Chazz Palminteri, Susan Mizer, Lauren Bittner. World Premiere*

***The Only Good Indian*** / USA (Director: Kevin Willmott; Screenwriter: Tom Carmody)—Set in early 1900s Kansas, a teenage Native American boy is taken from his family and forced to attend an Indian 'training' school to assimilate into White society. *Cast: Wes Studi, Winter Fox Frank, J. Kenneth Campbell. World Premiere*

***Pomegranates and Myrrh (Al Mor wa al Rumman)*** / Palestinian Territories (Director and Screenwriter: Najwa Najjar)—The wife of a Palestinian prisoner searches for freedom. *Cast: Ali Suliman, Yasmine Al Massri, Ashraf Farah, Hiam Abbass. North American Premiere*

***The Vicious Kind*** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Lee Toland Krieger)—Suffering insomnia and testy by nature, Caleb Sinclair reluctantly picks up his brother Peter at college and brings him and his new girlfriend Emma home to his estranged father's house for Thanksgiving. *Cast: Brittany Snow, Adam Scott, J.K. Simmons, Alex Frost. World Premiere*

***World's Greatest Dad*** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Bobcat Goldthwait)—A comedy about a high school poetry teacher who learns that the things you want most may not be the things that make you happy. *Cast: Robin Williams, Daryl Sabara, Alexie Gilmore, Tom Kenny, Geoffrey Pierson. World Premiere*

The films screening in Spectrum: Documentary Spotlight are:

***It Might Get Loud*** / USA (Director: Davis Guggenheim)—The history of the electric guitar from the point of view of three legendary rock musicians. *Cast: The Edge, Jimmy Page, Jack White. U.S. Premiere*

**No Impact Man** / USA (Directors: Laura Gabbert and Justin Schein)—The documentary follows the Beavan family as they abandon their high consumption Fifth Avenue lifestyle in an attempt to make a no-net environmental impact for the course of one year. *Cast: Michelle Conlin, Colin Beavan. World Premiere*

**Passing Strange** / USA (Director: Spike Lee; Lyrics: Stew; Music: Stew and Heidi Rodewald)—A musical documentary about the international exploits of a young man from Los Angeles who leaves home to find himself and 'the real'. A theatrical stage production of the original Tony-Award winning book by Stew. *Cast: De'Adre Aziza, Daniel Breaker, Eisa Davis, Colman Domingo, Stew. World Premiere*

**Tyson** / USA (Director: James Toback)—An intimate look at the complex life of former heavyweight champ Mike Tyson. *Cast: Mike Tyson. North American Premiere*

**Why We Laugh: Black Comedians on Black Comedy** / USA (Director: Robert Townsend)—Using rare archival clips along with provocative interviews with many of today's leading comedians and social critics, *Why We Laugh* celebrates the incredible cultural influence and social impact black comedy has wielded over the past 400 years. *Cast: Chris Rock, Bill Cosby, Keenan Ivory Wayans, Steve Harvey, Dick Gregory. World Premiere*

**Wounded Knee** / USA (Director: Stanley Nelson; Screenwriter: Marcia Smith)—In 1890, American Indian groups took over the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota to draw attention to the 1890 massacre. Though the federal government failed to keep many of the promises that ended the siege, the event succeeded in bringing to the world's attention the desperate conditions of Indian reservation life. *World Premiere*

**The Yes Men Fix the World** / France/ USA (Directors: Andy Bichlbaum, Mike Bonanno and Kurt Engfehr)—A pair of notorious troublemakers sneak into corporate events disguised as captains of industry, then use their momentary authority to expose the biggest criminals on the planet. *Cast: Andy Bichlbaum, Mike Bonanno. World Premiere*

## PARK CITY AT MIDNIGHT

Park City at Midnight offers eight films that are likely to amuse, surprise, or shock the bleary-eyed viewer and offer a lively last stop in the nightly film-going circuit.

The films screening in Park City at Midnight this year are:

**Black Dynamite** / USA (Director: Scott Sanders; Screenwriters: Michael Jai White, Scott Sanders, and Byron Minns)—When 'The Man' murders his brother, pumps heroin into local orphanages, and floods the ghetto with adulterated malt liquor, 1970s African-American action legend Black Dynamite is the one hero willing to take him on. *Cast: Michael Jai White, Tommy Davidson, Salli Richardson-Whitfield, Byron Minns, James McManus. World Premiere*

**The Carter** / USA (Director: Adam Bhala Lough)—An in-depth, intimate look at the artist Dwayne "Lil' Wayne" Carter Jr, proclaimed by many as the "greatest rapper alive" *Cast: Lil' Wayne, Brian Williams, Cortez Bryant. World Premiere*

**Død Snø (Dead Snow)** / Norway (Director: Tommy Wirkola; Screenwriters: Tommy Wirkola and Stig Frode Henriksen)—A group of teenagers had all they needed for a successful ski vacation; cabin, skis, snowmobile, toboggan, copious amounts of beer and a fertile mix of the sexes. Certainly, none of them anticipated not returning home alive! However, the Nazi-zombie battalion haunting the mountains had other plans. *Cast: Vegard Hoel, Stig Frode Henriksen, Charlotte Frogner, Jenny Skavlan, Jeppe Beck Laursen. North American Premiere*

**Grace** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Paul Solet)—After losing her unborn child, Madeline Matheson insists on carrying the baby to term. Following the delivery, the child miraculously returns to life, but when

the baby develops a desperate appetite for human blood, Madeline is faced with a mother's ultimate decision. *Cast: Jordan Ladd, Samantha Ferris, Gabrielle Rose, Malcom Stewart, Stephen Park, Serge Houde. World Premiere*

***The Killing Room*** / USA (Director: Jonathan Liebesman; Screenwriters: Gus Krieger and Ann Peacock)—Four individuals sign up for a psychological research study only to discover that they are now subjects of a brutal, classified government program. *Cast: Chloe Sevigny, Peter Stormare, Clea DuVall, Timothy Hutton, Nick Cannon. World Premiere*

***Mystery Team*** / USA (Director: Dan Eckman; Screenwriters: Dominic Dierkes, Donald Glover, and DC Pierson)—A group of kid detectives called The Mystery Team struggle to solve a double murder to prove they can be real detectives before they graduate from high school. *Cast: Dominic Dierkes, D.C. Pierson, Donald Glover, Aubrey Plaza, Glenn Kalison. World Premiere*

***Spring Breakdown*** / USA (Director: Ryan Shiraki; Screenwriters: Ryan Shiraki and Rachel Dratch)—Three thirtysomething friends attempt to break the monotony of their uninspired lives by vacationing at a popular spring break getaway for college students. *Cast: Rachel Dratch, Amy Poehler, Parker Posey, Will Arnett, Rachel Hamilton. World Premiere*

***White Lightnin'*** / UK (Director: Dominic Murphy; Screenwriters: Shane Smith and Eddy Moretti)—The outrageous cult story of Jesco White, the dancing outlaw. *Cast: Ed Hogg, Carrie Fisher, Muse Watson, Wallace Merck, Clay Steakley. World Premiere*

## FRONTIER

The Festival's Frontier section explores the experimental world of filmmaking. Utilizing new directions in filmmaking and innovative aesthetic approaches, work in the Frontier category challenges and provokes audiences.

***Lunch Break/Exit*** / USA (Director: Sharon Lockhart)—*Lunch Break* and *Exit* yield from Lockhart's timely new film and photographic series about the bleak state of U.S. labor. In *Lunch Break*, a single tracking shot through a long corridor where workers take their lunch hour at the massive shipyard, Bath Iron Works in Maine, reveals how 42 workers spend their lunch break. In *Exit*, the frame constantly fills with teaming workers each day as they head for home after a long day's work.

***O'er the Land*** / USA (Director: Deborah Stratman)—A meditation on our national psyche and the milieu of elevated threat, 'O'er the Land' addresses gun culture, national identity, wilderness, consumption, patriotism and the possibility of personal transcendence.

***Stay the Same Never Change*** / USA (Director and Screenwriter: Laurel Nakadate)—A mix of visual fact and narrative fiction starring a group of amateur actors in Kansas City. Whether it's a family man looking for beauty or a young woman obsessed with polar bears and Oprah, the characters in this humorous film reveal quiet lives full of sadness and desire. *Cast: Dirk Cowan, Julie Potratz, Emily Boulllear, Cyan Meeks, Tate Buck. World Premiere*

***Where is Where?*** (Director: Eija Liisa-Ahtila)—*Where is Where?* is an experimental, four channel film based on an incident which happened during the struggle for independence in Algeria. As a reaction to the acts of violence committed by the French, two young Algerian boys murder their friend, a French boy of the same age. The film starts from the present day when the Death enters the house of a poet who is attempting to write about the incident. *World Premiere*

***Artist Spotlight: The Works of Maria Marshall*** / USA (Director: Maria Marshall)—Maria Marshall's disturbing and gorgeously composed video projections provoke the psychological dimensions of cinema. Often violent and always visually charming, Marshall often uses her two sons in the main roles of her films. Her work tackles fundamental subjects of motherhood, socialization and life experience and takes us back to the world of childhood as a pretext in order to evoke the anxiety of adults.

***You Won't Miss Me*** /USA (Director: Ry Russo-Young)—A portrait of a modern day rebel, Shelly Brown, a twenty-three year-old alienated urban misfit recently released from a psychiatric hospital. *Cast: Stella Schnabel, Rene Ricard. World Premiere*

For the 2009 Sundance Film Festival, 118 feature-length films were selected including 88 world premieres, 18 North American premieres, and 4 U.S. premieres representing 21 countries with 42 first-time filmmakers, including 28 in competition. These films were selected from 3,661 feature-length film submissions composed of 1,905 U.S. and 1,756 international feature-length films.

### **2009 Sundance Film Festival Sponsors**

The 2009 Sundance Film Festival Sponsors help sustain not only the Festival but also the year-round programs of the non-profit Sundance Institute. Their support is crucial to the Institute's mission of nurturing independent artists, inspiring risk-taking, and encouraging diversity in the arts. This year's Festival Sponsors include: Presenting Sponsors - Entertainment Weekly, HP and Honda; Leadership Sponsors - American Express, Delta Air Lines, DIRECTV, Google, Microsoft Corporation and; Sustaining Sponsors - Blockbuster Inc., FilterForGoodSM, a partnership between Brita® and Nalgene®, the National Milk Mustache "got milk?"® Campaign, Le Tourment Vert Absinthe Francaise, L'Oréal Paris, The New York Times, Ray-Ban, Sony Electronics, Inc., Stella Artois®, Timberland, and Utah Film Commission. Sundance Channel is the Official Television Network of the 2009 Sundance Film Festival.

### **Sundance Film Festival**

The Sundance Film Festival is the premier showcase for U.S. and international independent film, held each January in and around Park City, Utah. Presenting approximately 120 dramatic and documentary feature-length films in seven distinct categories and between 60 and 80 short films each year, the Sundance Film Festival has introduced American audiences to some of the most ground-breaking films of the past two decades, including ***sex lies and videotape***, ***Maria Full of Grace***, ***Hedwig and the Angry Inch***, ***An Inconvenient Truth***, ***Trouble the Water*** and ***Central Station***. [www.sundance.org/festival](http://www.sundance.org/festival)

### **Sundance Institute**

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a not-for-profit organization that fosters the development of original storytelling in film and theatre, and presents the annual Sundance Film Festival. Internationally recognized for its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as ***Angels in America***, ***Spring Awakening***, ***Boys Don't Cry*** and ***Born into Brothels***. [www.sundance.org](http://www.sundance.org)

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For images, please visit: <ftp://ftp.sundance.org>; Login ID: press; password: SFF09! (all caps).