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**FILM INDEPENDENT SELECTS 15 PROJECTS AND 34 FILMMAKERS
FOR THE 23rd FAST TRACK FILM FINANCE MARKET**

\$70,000 IN GRANTS AWARDED BY ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

\$10,000 GRANT AWARDED BY MPAC® HOLLYWOOD BUREAU

LOS ANGELES (November 18, 2025) — Film Independent, the nonprofit behind the Spirit Awards, announced the 15 projects and 34 filmmakers selected for its 23rd annual Fast Track Film Finance Market, returning in person November 19–21, 2025. Designed as a catalyst for bold new voices, the three-day market connects the participants with established financiers, production companies, agents, managers and other key industry professionals who can propel their current projects forward.

“We’re thrilled to welcome this year’s Fast Track participants, whose bold mix of fiction and nonfiction projects push creative boundaries and reflect the diverse voices shaping contemporary cinema,” said Dea Vazquez, Associate Director of Fiction Programs. “Bringing these visionary filmmakers together with key industry leaders at the finance market is an exciting opportunity to help them secure the support needed to bring their stories to life,” added Daniel Cardone, Senior Manager of Nonfiction Programs and Fiscal Sponsorship.

Film Independent is awarding a total of \$80,000 across three grants – the Sloan Fast Track Grant and Sloan Distribution Grant – to outstanding projects that explore science and technology themes or characters in engaging and innovative ways, as well as the MPAC® Hollywood Bureau Fellowship, a \$10,000 grant awarded to a filmmaker who identifies as American Muslim.

The Sloan Fast Track Grant, a \$20,000 grant was awarded to writer/director Etzu Shaw and producer Galt Niederhoffer for their project *Killing Jar*.

The \$50,000 Sloan Distribution Grant was awarded to *Humans in the Loop*, written and directed by Aranya Sahay and produced by Mathivanan Rajendran. The grant is awarded to one eligible finished film entering the distribution phase.

The MPAC® Hollywood Bureau Fellowship, a \$10,000 grant awarded to a filmmaker who identifies as American Muslim, will go to Sahar Jahani for *With Your Permission*.

Previous Fast Track projects include 2025 Berlinale winner for Best Documentary *Holding Liat* from Brandon and Lance Kramer; Shih-Ching Tsou's *Left-Handed Girl*, co-written, edited and produced by Sean Baker, which premiered at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival; Bing Liu's Academy Award-nominated *Minding the Gap* produced by Diane Quon; Raven Jackson's *All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt* produced by Maria Altamirano, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was released by A24; Saim Sadiq's Cannes Un Certain Regard and Spirit Award winner *Joyland* produced by Apoorva Charan; Elegance Bratton's *The Inspection* produced by Chester Algernall Gordon, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and was nominated in three categories at the 2023 Spirit Awards; *Blow the Man Down*, which was acquired by Amazon and nominated for Best First Screenplay at the 2020 Spirit Awards and *Jinn*, winner of Special Jury Recognition for Writing at the 2018 SXSW Film Festival. Other notable filmmakers who have participated in the program include Ana Lily Amirpour, James Ponsoldt, Tina Mabry, Lana Wilson and Chloé Zhao.

Industry participants include: 30WEST, 3Pas Studios, ABL Casting / Independent, American Cinematheque, Anonymous Content, Austin Film Festival, Bleecker Street, Blumhouse Productions, Book of Shadows, CAA, Cinephil, Cinetic Media, Closer Media, Concordia, Concourse Media, Construction Films, David Magdael & Associates, Inc, DocList, Duplass Brothers, Entertainment 360, EverWonder Studio, Giant Leap Media Ventures, Giant Pictures, Hulu / The Walt Disney Company, Hyde Park Entertainment, IDA, Impact Partners, Independent Artist Group, Jigsaw Productions, Kennedy Marshall, Kinema, Ley Line, Lit Entertainment, Luz Films, MACRO, Magnolia Pictures, Marginal Mediaworks, Monkeypaw Productions, National Geographic, NEON, Organic, Oxbelly, Park Pictures, Pinky Promise, Pressman Films, Roadside Attractions, Saturnia Film, Searchlight Pictures, SFFILM, ShivHans Pictures, Skye Films Ltd, Solidarity Media Network, Sons of Rigor, Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Storm City Films, Sundance, Tango Entertainment, The Film Collaborative, The Film Sales Company, Topic Studios, Tribeca Festival, Tribeca Studios, Unapologetic Projects, Unnecessary Pictures, Verve Ventures, Visit Films, Wavelength, WME, Wonder Project, Words & Pictures and XYZ Films.

Film Independent Artist Development programs promote unique independent voices by helping filmmakers create and advance new work through Project Involve, the Documentary Producing Lab, Documentary Story Lab, Episodic Lab, Episodic Directing Intensive, Screenwriting Lab, Fiction Producing Lab, Fast Track finance market and Fiscal Sponsorship, as well as through grants and awards that provide over one million dollars annually to visual storytellers.

For more information on any of the Labs, or the projects that have been developed in them, please contact artistdevelopment@filmIndependent.org. Additional information can be found at filmIndependent.org.

The 2025 Fast Track Film Finance Market is supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, MPAC® Hollywood Bureau and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The following filmmakers and their projects were selected to participate in Film Independent's 2025 Fast Track program:

FICTION TRACK:

All in My Family

Writer/Director: **Hao Wu**

Producer: **Lucia Liu**

Logline: When a struggling Taiwanese American documentary filmmaker decides to have a baby with his boyfriend through surrogacy, the ensuing chaos forces him to navigate family acceptance, cultural expectations and relationship challenges.

Bangbang Teahouse

Writer/Director: **Courtney Loo**

Producers: **Rachael Fung, David Karp, Mikey Schwartz-Wright**

Logline: Mimi & Hayley, the two parts of famed Chinese American music duo Bangbang, find their professional and romantic relationship at a crossroads; everything they've built precariously teeters with their new album. Over the course of 48 frenetic hours in New York City, they'll stop at nothing as they desperately convince their label to release it.

Best Man

Director: **Tyler Rabinowitz**

Producer: **Nico Blanco**

Logline: Years after being friend-dumped for being gay, a millennial groom-to-be's picture-perfect Boston life unravels when his chaotic ex-best friend from high school reenters his life — newly out and annoyingly hot.

But We Slept Soundly

Writer/Director: **Jake Kolton**

Producer: **Myriam Schroeter**

Logline: A bourgeois Brooklynite's comfortable reality unravels when he begins to suspect his husband is responsible for a hit and run.

Gone By Morning

Writer/Director: **Diego Ongaro**

Producer: **Rob Cristiano**

Logline: When Lucy, a free-spirited dancer, returns home to her family's Montana horse ranch, she's forced to reckon with the life she built on her own and the one she thought she left behind.

Killing Jar*

Writer/Director: **Etzu Shaw**

Producer: **Galt Niederhoffer**

Logline: Burdened by guilt after her mother's abrupt death, an insect researcher decides to undertake her own forensic entomology investigation to uncover the truth.

* 2025 Film Independent Alfred P. Sloan Fast Track Grant Recipient

Not My Name

Writer/Director: **Juan Paulo Laserna**

Producer: **Valeria Contreras**

Logline: In 1996 Colombia, a family travels under false identities to visit their dying patriarch. As fear and deceit consume them, ten-year-old Alvaro drifts toward the darkness they hoped to escape.

The Umbra

Writer/Director: **Rider Strong**

Producers: **Alexandra Barreto, Taylor Feltner**

Logline: When his partner Orion commits suicide, David Alturo ventures deep into the redwoods to confront Orion's hermit father. But soon, the men work together to complete Orion's final, mysterious invention...

When the River Split Open

Writer/Director: **Jess X. Snow**

Producer: **Petrus van Staden**

Logline: On an overdue visit to their ancestral land, an impulsive Chinese American escapes their over-protective maternal family to search for their estranged father—whose disappearance is entwined with the extinction of the Yangtze River dolphin.

With Your Permission*

Writer/Director: **Sahar Jahani**

Producer: **Ashim Ahuja**

Logline: *With Your Permission* is about three Iranian American Muslim sisters navigating their relationship to intimacy when they discover their sixty-year-old, widowed mother is getting remarried, forcing them to re-examine everything they thought they knew about love, family and forgiveness.

*2025 MPAC® Hollywood Bureau Fellowship Recipient

DOCUMENTARY TRACK:

Counted

Co-Director/Producer: **Erica Tanamachi**

Co-Director/Director of Photography/Producer: **Joseph East**

Producer: **Evan Mascagni**

Logline: *Counted* follows Southern activists as they turn the trauma of pregnancy in prison into a movement to end prison birth and transform a broken system.

****holds you tight****

Director/Producer: **Jane M. Wagner**

Producer: **Joe Weil**

Logline: A lonely night watchman develops a relationship with an AI chatbot, transforming his worldview and challenging his perception of identity and reality.

Love and Justice: The Arlene Carmen Story

Directors/Producers: **Linda Goldstein Knowlton, Tessa Carmen DeRoy**

Logline: Arlene Carmen was the Administrator of Judson Memorial Church from 1967 to 1994. In partnership with Reverend Howard Moody she ran the multi-denominational Clergy Consultation Service on Abortion which connected 500,000 women to safe abortion care, prior to Roe V. Wade; created a ministry for street walking prostitutes; and distributed experimental treatments to early AIDS patients from the church garden room. Much of their work was illegal.

Symphony of Silence

Director: **Julianne Sato-Parker**

Producer: **Bridie Bischoff**

Logline: *Symphony of Silence* is a character-driven feature documentary about two people brought together by the belief that listening has the power to change the world.

The Quiet Part

Director: **Rachel Lauren Mueller**

Producer: **Ariel Tilson**

Logline: When a pagan white supremacist group takes root in a quiet American farming town, it ignites an intense struggle over who has the right to belong.

ABOUT THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation is a New York based, philanthropic, not-for-profit institution that makes grants for research in science, technology and economics; quality and diversity of scientific institutions; and public engagement with science. Sloan's program in Public Understanding of Science and Technology, directed by Doron Weber, supports Books, Radio & Podcasts, Film, Television, Theater, YouTube & TikTok and New Media to reach a wide, non-specialized audience and to bridge the two cultures of science and the humanities.

Sloan's Film Program encourages filmmakers to create more realistic and compelling stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes about scientists and engineers in the popular imagination. Over the past two decades, Sloan has partnered with a dozen leading film schools and established annual awards in screenwriting and film production. The Foundation also supports screenplay development programs with the Sundance Institute, SFFILM, Film Independent, The Black List, the Athena Film Festival and Toronto International Film Festival. The Sloan Film Program has supported over 850 film projects and has helped develop over 30 feature films, including *Tesla*, *Radium Girls*, *Adventures of a Mathematician*, *One Man Dies a Million Times*, *The Sound of Silence*, *To Dust*, *Operator*, *The Imitation Game* and *The Man Who Knew Infinity*. The Foundation has supported feature documentaries such as Werner Herzog's *Theater of Thought*, David France's *How to Survive a Pandemic*, *Picture a Scientist*, *Coded Bias*, *In Silico*, *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life*, *The Bit Player*,

Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story, *Particle Fever* and Jacques Perrin's *Oceans*. It has also given early award recognition to standout films such as *Frankenstein*, *Twisters*, *Oppenheimer*, *Don't Look Up*, *After Yang*, *Linoleum*, *Son of Monarchs*, *Ammonite*, *The Aeronauts*, *Searching*, *The Martian*, *First Man* and *Hidden Figures*.

The Foundation's book program includes early support for *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race*, the best-selling book that became the highest grossing Oscar-nominated film of 2017, and Kai Bird & Martin Sherwin's Pulitzer Prize-winning *American Prometheus*, adapted for the screen in Christopher Nolan's hit film *Oppenheimer*.

For more information visit sloan.org or follow @SloanPublic on X, Instagram or Facebook.

ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT

For over 40 years, Film Independent has helped filmmakers get their projects made and seen. The nonprofit organization's core mission is to champion creative independence in visual storytelling in all its forms and foster a culture of inclusion, in support of a global community of artists and audiences who embody diversity, innovation, curiosity and uniqueness of vision.

In addition to producing the [Film Independent Spirit Awards](#), the organization supports creative professionals with [Artist Development](#) programs, grants and labs. Signature mentorship program [Project Involve](#) fosters the careers of talented filmmakers from underrepresented communities. Weekly Education events and workshops equip filmmakers of all ages and experience levels with tools and resources. International programs provide cultural exchanges and career-building opportunities for film professionals around the world. And year-round screening series [Film Independent Presents](#) offers a robust program of unique cinematic experiences, including screenings, conversations, Live Reads and Bring the Noise musical events.

For more information or to become a Member, visit filmIndependent.org.

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