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September 2011

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY ANNOUNCES  
MARGARET MEAD FILMMAKER AWARD NOMINEES**

**LED BY DARREN ARONOFSKY, JURY INCLUDES  
KAREN COOPER, LIZ GARBUS, AND STANLEY NELSON**

**35TH ANNUAL MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL  
NOVEMBER 10-13, 2011**

The American Museum of Natural History's **Margaret Mead Film Festival**, held November 10-13, 2011, announces the seven outstanding nominees for the **Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award**. The award nominees, all U.S. premieres, continue to push the boundaries of visual anthropology as they take audiences deeply into contemporary societal challenges around the world.

The Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award recognizes documentary filmmakers who embody the spirit, energy, and innovation demonstrated by anthropologist Margaret Mead in her research, fieldwork, films, and writings. The award is given to a filmmaker whose feature documentary offers a new perspective on a culture or community while displaying artistic excellence and originality in storytelling. Eligible filmmakers must present a U.S. premiere at the Margaret Mead Film Festival. The 2011 winner will be announced on November 13 at the Mead Festival's closing night ceremony.

Celebrating 35 years as the preeminent showcase for contemporary cultural storytelling, the 2011 Margaret Mead Film Festival will screen more than 40 outstanding films culled from more than 1,000 submissions. With films that range from political investigations and observational documentaries to animated and archival works, the Margaret Mead Film Festival strives to illuminate the complexity and diversity of peoples and cultures from around the world. This anniversary festival also features a special Mead retrospective, which includes titles by Timothy Asch and Jean Rouch.

The 2011 nominees for the Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award are:

- *All for the Good of the World and Nosovice (Vše Pro Dobro Světa a Nošovic)*, directed by Vit Klusak (Czech Republic)

Czech provocateur Vit Klusák is at it again, turning his attention to another globalization skirmish. As a major automobile manufacturer locates a new factory to the small village of Nošovice in the Czech Republic, Klusak details the now-altered lives of its inhabitants using feature film cinematography, Brechtian techniques of participatory drama, and old-fashioned journalistic muckraking. The heart-wrenching story of neighbor pitted against neighbor, the forceful sale of land, and a corporate giant's broken promise to contribute "all the best for the world" is told through a number of poignant, and at times humorous, turns.

- *Kinder*, directed by Bettina Büttner (Germany)

As the sun's rays stream through Bavarian woods, four young boys dart among the trees, engrossed in a joyful game of hide-and-seek. These brief moments of innocent abandon furnish a stark contrast to the reality of their lives in a German orphanage. First-time filmmaker Bettina Büttner observes and captures moments of startling candor. Intrigued by the preternaturally thoughtful Marvin, she documents him after he moves back home. Shot in crisp black-and-white, *Kinder* expresses the indelibility of a dysfunctional childhood on young minds.

- *Memoirs of a Plague*, directed by Robert Nugent (Australia)

Visiting entomologists, local farmers, and insecticide bomber pilots brace for the inevitable and track locust invasions predicted in Ethiopia, Egypt, and Australia. Told with a storyteller's relish for suspense, *Memoirs of a Plague* mixes archival and contemporary footage of plans to eradicate the pests with the director's own remarkable macro-photography of the misunderstood and maligned "hopper," which is doing only as nature intended.

- *Rainmakers*, directed by Floris-Jan van Luyn (China)

With striking cinematography, Floris-Jan van Luyn chronicles persistence, hope, and heroism in stories of a fisherwoman's efforts to clean up a polluted river, a Hunan housewife's demands to shut down a nearby factory, a Beijing woman's work to organize a mass protest against a noxious incinerator, and a Mongolian shepherd's plan to reclaim desiccated pastureland. Bravely facing bureaucracy, greed, and violence, they fight for the most basic of human rights: clean air and water.

- *Small Kingdom of Lo*, directed by Caroline Leitner, Daniel Mazza, Giuseppe Tedeschi (Nepal)

Man and nature meet at the rhythm of an archaic life in a remote village in the Himalayan highlands. Through the voices of three diverse residents — a veteran trader, a 14-year-old Buddhist nun, and a young man dreaming of America — the conflicted hopes of those from a traditional community on the cusp of change are revealed.

- *Space Sailors (Fliegerkosmonauten)*, directed by Marian Kiss (Germany, Poland)

Hand-selected from hundreds of fighter pilots trained to protect their motherlands, the men of the Soviet Union's Intercosmos Programme stood as the quintessential illustration of their nation's idealized views of manhood and patriotism. They hailed from Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Vietnam, Cuba, Mongolia, and Afghanistan, the children of farmers and factory workers. Filmmaker Marian Kiss, a Hungarian with childhood memories of her own country's cosmonaut, visits ten space sailors to uncover what happened to these heroes after the fall of communism.

- *To The Light*, directed by Yuanchen Liu (China)

The bright lights of China's booming economy are powered by the suffering of its miners, who work deep in the perilous coal shafts around the country. The miners dig armed only with pickaxes, and the shafts are supported by rudimentary wooden props. *To The Light* follows them into the dangerous darkness, even capturing the final moments of one unfortunate miner. The story depicts three coal mining families in Sichuan Province, West China, revealing their untold struggle to escape the mines and poverty, and the human cost of China's industrialization.

All of the nominees will be in attendance at the Mead Film Festival.

Led by jury chair and Academy Award-nominated director **Darren Aronofsky**, the 2011 Mead Award jury members include Film Forum's **Karen Cooper**, documentary producer **Liz Garbus**, and filmmaker **Stanley Nelson**.

## Jury Bios

### **Darren Aronofsky, Jury Chair**

Academy Award-nominated and Independent Spirit Award-winning director Darren Aronofsky's critically-acclaimed *Black Swan* earned Natalie Portman the Oscar for Best Actress. *The Wrestler*, which was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, won Best Feature at the Independent Spirit Awards and garnered Academy Award nominations for both Mickey Rourke and Marisa Tomei. Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* was nominated for five Independent Spirit Awards, including one for Best Director and a win for Best Actress Ellen Burstyn; she also received Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations for her performance. Aronofsky's first feature, *π*, won the Director's Award at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival and an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Screenplay. The American Film Institute gave Aronofsky the prestigious Franklin J. Schaffner Alumni Medal, the Stockholm Film Festival presented him the Golden Horse Visionary Award, and he has won three Independent Spirit Awards.

### **Karen Cooper**

As director of the Film Forum, Karen Cooper, along with Mike Maggiore, co-program the theater's NYC premieres, which include many documentary films. Recent premieres include: D.A.

Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus's *Kings of Pastry*, John Turturro's *Passione*, Vadim Jendreyko's *The Woman with the 5 Elephants*, Gereon Wetzel's *El Bulli: Cooking in Progress*, and Sophie Fiennes's *Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow*. Additionally, Cooper has premiered key documentaries by Werner Herzog, Agnès Varda, Chris Marker, Frederick Wiseman, Terence Davies, Kim Longinotto, and Heddy Honigmann. She has been a member of film festival juries around the world, including in Naples, Vancouver, Sarajevo, Amsterdam and Copenhagen. She has received numerous awards including an honorary doctorate from the American Film Institute, a Special Award for Programming Excellence from the New York Film Critics Circle, and a Certificate of Merit from the Municipal Arts Society.

### **Liz Garbus**

Academy-Award nominated filmmaker Liz Garbus has produced award-winning documentaries for over ten different television broadcasters and for theatrical distribution. Her documentaries include a wide array of subjects including the U.S. criminal justice system, the entertainment industry, marriage, prostitution, teenagers living on society's fringes and the Holocaust. Her films include *Street Fight*, which was nominated for the Academy Award in the Best Documentary category, and won a Tribeca Film Festival Audience Award; *The Farm: Angola, USA*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and two Emmy Awards; and *The Execution of Wanda Jean*, which won the Thurgood Marshall Journalism Award and was nominated for Best Documentary by NAMIC (National Association of Minorities in Communications).

### **Stanley Nelson**

Veteran filmmaker Stanley Earl Nelson, Jr., wrote, produced and directed his first documentary *Two Dollars and a Dream: The Story of Madame C.J. Walker*, which won the CINE Golden Eagle Award and was cited as the Best Production of the Decade by the Black Filmmaker Foundation. He produced and directed *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords*, which was nominated for an Emmy, and *Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, which won an award at the Black International Cinema Festival. He produced the acclaimed documentary *The Murder of Emmett Till*, which won an Emmy for Best Directing-Nonfiction, the Sundance Film Festival 2003 Special Jury Prize, and the George Foster Peabody Award. Nelson has taught film production and broadcast journalism in Rwanda and at Howard University in Washington, D.C. He received fellowships at the American Film Institute, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the 2002 MacArthur Foundation Genius Fellowship. In 2004, Nelson was honored with the Educational Video Center's Excellence in Community Service Award.

### **American Museum of Natural History (amnh.org)**

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses 45 permanent exhibition halls and galleries for temporary exhibitions, the Rose Center for Earth and Space with the Hayden Planetarium, state-of-the-art research laboratories and five active research divisions that support more than 200 scientists in addition to one of the largest natural history libraries in the Western Hemisphere and a permanent collection of more than 32 million specimens

and cultural artifacts. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, it is the first American museum to grant the Ph.D. degree. In 2012, the Museum will begin offering a pilot Master of Arts in Teaching with a specialization in earth science. Approximately 5 million visitors from around the world came to the Museum last year and its exhibitions and Space Shows can be seen in venues on five continents. The Museum's website and growing collection of apps for mobile devices extend its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more beyond its walls. Visit [amnh.org](http://amnh.org) for upcoming exhibitions.

Follow the Margaret Mead Festival on Facebook at [facebook.com/MeadFilmFestival](https://facebook.com/MeadFilmFestival). Follow the Museum on Twitter at [twitter.com/amnh](https://twitter.com/amnh), on Facebook at [facebook.com/naturalhistory](https://facebook.com/naturalhistory), on YouTube at [youtube.com/AMNHorg](https://youtube.com/AMNHorg), on Flickr at [flickr.com/amnh](https://flickr.com/amnh), and on Tumblr at [amnhnyc.tumblr.com](https://amnhnyc.tumblr.com).

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