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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 10, 2007

For More Information Contact:
For Sundance Institute
Amy McGee
310.492.2333
Amy_mcgee@sundance.org

For The Adrienne Shelly Foundation
Adam Walker
Jeremy Walker + Associates
212.595.6161
adam@jeremywalker.com

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE ADRIENNE SHELLY FOUNDATION WOMEN FILMMAKERS GRANT Filmmaker and Sundance Lab Alumni Maryam Keshavarz Awarded Inaugural Grant

Los Angeles, CA, August 10, 2007 - Today, Sundance Institute, in collaboration with The Adrienne Shelly Foundation, awarded the inaugural Adrienne Shelly Foundation Women Filmmakers Grant to filmmaker **Maryam Keshavarz**. The establishment of the Grant unites Sundance Institute with The Adrienne Shelly Foundation in its mission to support the advancement of talented women filmmakers. The Adrienne Shelly Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the memory of the late writer/director/actor Adrienne Shelly. Sundance Institute's Feature Film Program is a year-round program that supports the advancement of emerging filmmakers with distinctive, independent projects.

"It's such an honor for Sundance Institute to be associated with The Adrienne Shelly Foundation. Adrienne was a uniquely talented filmmaker whose third film, WAITRESS, was a highlight of the 2007 Sundance Film Festival," said Michelle Satter, Founding Director, Sundance Institute Feature Film Program. "This grant will help to provide momentum and financial support for Maryam Keshavarz as she focuses on the next crucial steps in her filmmaking process. It is a significant step in advancing independent films by a new generation of women filmmakers."

The Adrienne Shelly Foundation will provide a \$5,000 grant to be awarded by Sundance Institute each July to a filmmaker coming out of the Feature Film Program's June Director's Lab. The first recipient, Maryam Keshavarz, participated in both the 2007 January Screenwriting Lab and the 2007 June Directing and Screenwriting Labs with her project CIRCUMSTANCE.

"The Sundance Institute and The Adrienne Shelly Foundation have a shared mission of nurturing talented, up-and-coming filmmakers," said Andy Ostroy, Ms. Shelly's husband and Adrienne Shelly Foundation founder and executive director. "Adrienne would be immensely proud and honored to have us associated with such a prestigious organization in helping other women filmmakers produce their work."

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8530 Wilshire Boulevard, 3rd Floor
Beverly Hills, California 90211
PHN 310.360.1981, FAX 310.360.1969

307 West 200 South, Suite 5002
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101
PHN 801.328.3456, FAX 801.575.5175

www.sundance.org

Shelly's film WAITRESS premiered at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival and was purchased there by Fox Searchlight. The film, which stars Keri Russell, Nathan Fillion, Cheryl Hines and Shelly opened in theatres May 2 and has since grossed nearly \$20 million. Shelly began her career in starring roles in Hal Hartley's *The Unbelievable Truth* and *Trust*, the latter of which was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the 1990 Sundance Film Festival, where Hartley's script received the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award.

"It's very meaningful for me to receive this grant from the Adrienne Shelly Foundation and Sundance Institute," said Maryam Keshavarz. "I attended the premiere of WAITRESS at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival and have admired Adrienne's work as a writer/director over many years. This grant is a real gift coming at just the right moment."

Drawing upon her personal experience living in both the United States and Iran, Maryam brings a unique perspective to her projects. With her current project, CIRCUMSTANCE, Maryam explores the charged climate of today's Iran through the eyes of two girls in the midst of turbulent adolescence. As they navigate and rebel against the strict rules of their culture and environment, the two girls must also grapple with their intense and complex relationship with each other.

Maryam Keshavarz was the recipient of the Steve Tisch fellowship at NYU's graduate film program. Her feature documentary THE COLOR OF LOVE, screened at international festivals including the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, the Montreal World Film Festival, MoMA New York, and It's All True (Brazil), among others; it garnered top prizes such as the International Documentary Association's David L. Wolper Award, the Jury Award at DocuDays, and the Full Frame's Spectrum Award. In 2005, Keshavarz returned to Argentina, where she studied Latin American literature at the University of Buenos Aires to shoot her short film THE DAY I DIED. The film has shown in Main Competition at Mar del Plata, Clermont-Ferrand, New York Film Festival, the Berlin International Film Festival (where it received two awards), and recently won a Special Jury Award at the Rio de Janeiro International Short Film Festival.

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE FEATURE FILM PROGRAM

Sundance Institute's Feature Film Program is a year-round system of project artist support for emerging filmmakers. Our search for talent is global. The focus is on new talent, unique voices at an early time in a filmmaker's career. Each year, the Feature Film Program mentors a new class of up to 25 Fellows through each stage of the story development and production process concentrating on tailored support to the specific needs and individual challenges of their projects. Following the Sundance Lab experience, the Fellows are offered on-going creative and strategic advice, significant post-production resources, and direct artist support through project-specific mini-grants and fellowships.

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981 in the mountains of Sundance, Utah, Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated year-round to the development of artists of independent vision and to the exhibition of their new work. Since its inception, the Institute has grown into an internationally recognized resource for thousands of independent artists through its Film Festival and artistic development programs for filmmakers, screenwriters, composers, writers, playwrights and theatre artists. The original values of independence, creative risk-taking, and discovery continue to define and guide the work of Sundance Institute, both with US artists and, increasingly, with artists from other regions of the world.

The programs of Sundance Institute include the annual Sundance Film Festival which is held in Park City each January and is considered the premier U.S. showcase for American and international independent film. The Institute supports nonfiction filmmakers through the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program by providing year-round support through the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund and a series of programs that encourage the exploration of innovative nonfiction storytelling and promote the exhibition of

documentary films to increasingly broader audiences. The Sundance Institute Feature Film Program is a year-round program dedicated to supporting artist development and the advancement of distinctive, singular independent projects. Each year 20-25 emerging filmmakers from the U.S. and abroad participate in the program which includes the Screenwriters and Filmmakers Labs, ongoing creative and practical advice, the post-production project, and financial support through fellowship opportunities. The Sundance Institute Theatre Program is committed to invigorating the national theatre movement with original and creative work and to nurturing the diversity of artistic expression among theatre artists. The Sundance Institute Film Music Program is dedicated to supporting the development of emerging film composers, as well as impacting the ways in which independent filmmakers approach music in their films. The Institute also maintains The Sundance Collection at UCLA, a unique archive of independent film.

ADRIENNE SHELLY FOUNDATION

The Adrienne Shelly Foundation supports the artistic achievements of female actors, writers and directors through a series of scholarships and grants, providing recipients with financial support and consultative access to the Foundation's advisory board of actors, directors, producers, composers, law, public relations, academic and trade professionals. Reflecting Adrienne's spirit, generosity, courage and whimsy, our goal is to recognize the tremendous passion and commitment of women artists in creating their own work, and provide them with support and guidance particularly during periods of transition and struggle. For more information on the Foundation, please visit www.adrienneshellyfoundation.org

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