

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL'S 9TH ANNUAL SCREENWRITERS' LAB
CO-SPONSORED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION
RUNS APRIL 3RD – 5TH IN EAST HAMPTON, NY**

The Hamptons International Film Festival will host its 9th annual Screenwriters' Lab cosponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation this April 3 – 5 in East Hampton, NY. Over the course of one long weekend, emerging screenwriters will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one each day with established screenwriting mentors who will advise them on how to develop their scripts and move their projects closer to production. Within this supportive environment, the screenwriters are encouraged to take risks and discover new possibilities for their projects. Participants also attend group discussions over meals, while evening events bring them together with board members, sponsors and the local artistic community.

“The Screenwriters' Lab is one of the festival's most rewarding year-round activities because it allows us to be involved with filmmakers and the creative process in an intimate setting and at an early stage,” states Director of Programming David Nugent. “The frenetic excitement of the festival itself is nicely balanced by the lab's more relaxed exchange of ideas and creative energy. Since the Sloan Foundation began its support of the festival a decade ago, we have seen many talented screenwriters go through the lab and we continue to enjoy our collaboration in presenting scientists and engineers in a realistic and compelling fashion.”

Following the lab, the festival will assist writers in making contact with industry producers, agents, and development executives, and continue to support the writers as they revise their scripts. According to Executive Director, Karen Arikian, “Thanks to the generosity of the Sloan Foundation, several of the screenwriters will also be invited back to the festival in October to continue to work on and refine their projects. This process allows the Lab in conjunction with the Festival to establish a community and ongoing support structure that develops and promotes diverse voices, artistic ambitions, and the audiences that rejoice in both.”

2009 Lab Participants, Screenplays and Project Descriptions:

1) KIRK DAVIS and SAM SLOVES – THE TRANSFORMATION

Based on the true story of Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis, the innovative Hungarian physician who makes a radical discovery of the cause and cure of Childbed Fever, a disease killing thousands of poor pregnant women in the hospitals of 19th Century Europe. As he fights against the many medical setbacks in the prevention of the disease itself, he must also combat the prejudice, scientific hubris, political repression, and superstitions of his day. An Alfred P. Sloan supported script.

Kirk Davis bio

Kirk Davis was born in Memphis, Tennessee. He studied filmmaking at Columbia University, receiving an MFA. He was a founding writer/performer of the groundbreaking comedy group Tunnelvision, which performed at Stand Up NY, Gotham, and Caroline's Comedy Club. He wrote and directed several short films and the feature film SCREEN DOOR JESUS, which won numerous awards including Best Film, Best Cinematography, and Best Score at the 2003 Hamptons International Film Festival. It was released theatrically in 15 markets and reviewed in *Variety*, *LA Times*, *Austin Chronicle*, Rotten Tomatoes, and many others. Kirk recently completed his second feature comedy, WELCOME TO ACADEMIA starring James Le Gros, Callie Thorne, Laila Robbins, Matt Servitto, Jess Weixler, and Dan Bakkedahl. He's been a member of the Directors Guild of America since 2002, and his script for GARY, SON OF GOD is being set up at Inferno Entertainment.

Sam Sloves bio

Sam Sloves began his career producing the Sundance award winning film, AN AMBUSH OF GHOSTS. He has produced, written and directed several shorts including GOLD CUP and CLOSE CALL. He did research for David Sterritt for his books on Jean-Luc Godard and taught film at Mercy College. He has acted as a liaison between the World Science Foundation and the New York City Department of Education, where he presently works in the Office of Portfolio Development. His work for the DOE was recently profiled in the *Village Voice*.

2) **TOM ELLIS – HOMELAND**

A renowned journalist loses his objectivity while embedded with a family of farmers under siege by government forces.

Tom Ellis bio

Tom Ellis is a writer, actor, and director with 20 years of experience in theater and film. He served as Artistic Director of New York's renowned "Habitual Theater" from 1993-97 where he staged hugely successful collaborations with fashion luminaries Oscar de la Renta, Carolina Herrera, Cynthia Rowley, and Joseph Aboud. In 1998 he founded "The Attic Show" a film and theatrical production company responsible for over twenty New York stage premiers, as well as the award winning short film, JOKEBITCH, and his feature directorial debut, THE FAILURE, currently in post-production. As an actor you can see his work in the IFC classic PASSING STONES, the forthcoming THE SOUND, and the action flick CROSSING THE LINE. He has four screenplays currently in development, including THE KEEPER OF THE PINSTripES, which was chosen by the New York Yankees and MLB to be the final film shot in the old Yankee Stadium. It is currently in pre-production.

3) **KAREN ODYNIEC – CHARM SCHOOL FOR PRIMATES**

To win a coveted grant, a lovelorn primatologist with acute social anxiety must present her ape research to a board of executives and defeat brilliant, socially adept scientists. Under the merciless scrutiny of a top presentation coach, she learns the art of public speaking and takes on the demons that threaten to crush her mired career and love life. An Alfred P. Sloan supported script.

Karen Odyniec

After launching Reel Siren Films in 1998, Karen's first cinematic effort, WATERMELON, sponsored by Women Make Movies, won a special commendation at the CIAFF and showcased at the NY Women's Film Festival among others. She has directed workshop productions for Zoetrope Live Story and The Actors Playground and has stage managed plays and festivals for NY Theatre Workshop, The Actors' Studio, Naked Angels, Jim Henson Productions and The Public Theatre, working with playwrights and directors such as Christopher Ashley, Jonathan Larson, Kenneth Lonergan and Claudia Shear.

Karen has made several short narrative and documentary films, including THE VALISE, which premiered at Lincoln Center/NYU Triks and Tunes Silent Festival in 2005, and THE FACE OF FAMILY HOMELESSNESS (Compass), a documentary that helped raise money and awareness in San Francisco. Her script CHARM SCHOOL FOR PRIMATES, won a 2008 NYU Sloan Foundation Feature Screenplay Award. AMERICA, LET'S GO! Karen's music video based on characters and music from her short film DEADLINE, had its world premiere at the 2009 SXSW Film Festival. Karen is a Masters candidate at NYU Tisch School of the Arts and resides in New York City.

4) **IAN OGDEN – CHILD IN THE DARK**

As her neighborhood rapidly loses its grip on a maddening virus turning the infected into raving psychopaths, Amanda, a blind ten-year-old, must fend for herself until a rescue convoy can reach her at dawn. If she is to survive the night, Amanda must overcome the darkness of her own blindness and defend her home against those she once trusted most.

Ian Ogden bio

Ian Ogden is a graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. While at NYU, Ian was awarded a "Panavision New Filmmaker Production Grant", with which he wrote, directed, and edited COPPERHEAD ROAD - a 35mm short film which had its International Premiere at the 2006 Sao Paulo International Film Festival, was an "Official Selection" at 21 festivals worldwide, and was awarded "Best Narrative Short" at the 2006 Denver Underground Film Festival and "Honorable Mention for a Short Film" at the 2005 Big Apple Film Festival.

Since graduating, Ian has been working as a freelance film and video editor on numerous projects including short films, commercials, and music videos. Additionally, Ian has worked as a script supervisor on the narrative feature, BROTHER, and as a production manager on industrials for Panasonic, Ford Motor Company, and Zest Soap. He is currently based in Brooklyn, NY and is a member of IFP and NALIP.

2009 Screenwriters' Lab Mentors:

1) **MARK CHRISTOPHER**'s debut feature film, 54, starred Ryan Phillippe, Mike Myers, Mark Ruffalo and Salma Hayek. Christopher's festival comedy hit PIZZA (IFC/InDigEnt) won a 2007 Independent Spirit Award and was released on DVD by the Weinstein Company. Christopher's award-winning short films are theatrically distributed by Strand Releasing, Frameline, Saltzgeber Intl, and the BFI. These shorts have been screened at all major international film festivals, including Sundance, Toronto, New York and Berlin. ALKALI, IOWA starring Mary Beth Hurt, won the Golden Teddy for best short at Berlin, and took top prizes at various American film festivals. Christopher's first short, THE DEAD BOYS' CLUB, won several awards at international festivals and is regarded as an influential film in the New Queer Cinema of the early 90s. In addition to writing for the screen, Christopher has written both comedy and drama one-hour television pilots for CBS, Spelling and Logo/MTV. He is currently translating/adapting the play "Mlle Chanel" from Portuguese to English for a 2009 Broadway run. Christopher's work has screened at MoMA, and he has received grants from the Paul Robeson Fund, the Jerome Foundation, NYFA, and is the 2005 recipient of the Princess Grace Statue Award for excellence in filmmaking.

2) **BILL COLLAGE** has written more than 25 movies within the studio system. His credits include RANSOM, NEW YORK MINUTE and ACCEPTED. He has also written on I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS, WRONG TURN, FUN WITH DICK & JANE, and GET SMART. His upcoming movies are STILL-UNTITLED BRETT RATNER HEIST and MOBY DICK, both for Universal. He lives in Sag Harbor, NY.

3) **MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM** received his B.A. in English literature from Stanford University and his M.F.A. in creative writing from the University of Iowa. His novel A HOME AT THE END OF THE WORLD was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1990 to wide acclaim. A film version (with a screenplay by Cunningham) was directed by Michael Mayer and featured Colin Farrell, Robin Wright Penn, Dallas Roberts and Sissy Spacek. In 1999 he received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the PEN/Faulkner Award for his novel THE HOURS. A film adaptation of THE HOURS was directed by Stephen Daldry, and featured Julianne Moore, Nicole Kidman, and Meryl Streep. His work has appeared in numerous publications, including The New Yorker, The Atlantic Monthly, and The Paris Review. In June 2005, his latest novel, SPECIMEN DAYS, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. In 2007, his adapted screenplay EVENING was made into a film starring Vanessa Redgrave, Claire Danes, Toni Collette, and Meryl Streep. He lives in New York City.

4) **JAMES VANDERBILT** sold his first screenplay 48 hours before he graduated from the University of Southern California's Filmic Writing Program, because that will help you make friends at a film school. *Esquire* Magazine profiled him in their 2006 Genius Issue and called him a "Fearless Screenwriter". James is terrified of the following in no particular order – Meeting New People, Insects, Dancing, The Dark, In-Laws, Jello, Werewolves, and The Rapture. His films as writer and producer include ZODIAC, THE RUNDOWN, and the upcoming SPIDER-MAN 4. He's generally considered a nice guy and will crush all those who oppose him.

The Hamptons International Film Festival was founded to celebrate the independent film - long, short, narrative and documentary - and to introduce a unique and varied spectrum of international films and filmmakers to our audiences. The festival is committed to exhibiting films that express fresh voices and differing global perspectives, with the hope that these programs will enlighten audiences, provide invaluable exposure for filmmakers and present inspired entertainment for all. **The 17th Annual Hamptons International Film Festival will be held Thursday, October 8 through Monday, October 12, 2009.**

CONTACT: Director of Programming: David Nugent, Tel: (212) 229-2463, email: david@hamptonsfilmfest.org

PRESS CONTACT: Gary Springer or Jennifer Blum, Springer Associates PR, 212-354-4660,
gary@springerassociatespr.com