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Sundance Film Festival 2024 Introduction

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Sundance Film Festival 2024 Introduction

Abstract

This is the Introduction to our coverage of the 2024 Sundance Film Festival.

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Author Notes

John Lyden is the Department Chair and Blizek Professor of Religious Studies at University of Nebraska Omaha. He has been the Editor of the Journal of Religion & Film since 2011. He is the author of *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals* (NYU Press), and the editor of the Routledge Companion to Religion and Film and co-editor (with Eric Michael Mazur) of the Routledge Companion to Religion and Popular Culture. He also co-edited, with Ken Derry, *The Myth Awakens: Canon Conservatism, and Fan Reception of Star Wars* (Wipf and Stock 2018).



Once again, we were back in snowy Park City to review films for the *Journal of Religion & Film*. Reviewers included myself, Dereck Daschke, and Chris Deacy in person, in addition to some shorts reviewed online by Bill Blizek and Monica Blizek. We reviewed 34 Sundance films in all, and a number of them were among the award winners. These included *In the Summers* (US Grand Jury Prize, Dramatic, and Directing Award, US Dramatic), *Sujo* (World Cinema Grand Jury Prize, Dramatic), *Handling the Undead* (World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Original Music), *Girls Will Be Girls* (Audience Award: World Cinema Dramatic AND World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Acting, for Preeti Panigrahi), *In the Land of Brothers* (Directing Award: World Cinema Dramatic), *Union* (US Documentary Special Jury Award for the Art of Change), and *Little Death* (NEXT Innovator Award presented by Adobe).

Of the creators of the 153 projects accepted by the Festival, 31 (53%) were first time feature filmmakers, 75 (44%) were female, and 80 (47%) were filmmakers of color. 36 (22%) were LGBTQ+ filmmakers. The Sundance Film Festival continues to be at the forefront of inclusion of

diverse voices, resulting in a rich array of offerings representing a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

Our thanks go to the Press office, and in particular Tammi Rosen, Chief Communications Officer of the Sundance Institute, for coordinating all the complexities of our access; and to Renata Luczak and Sylvy Fernandez for their assistance in receiving access to short films online. Those who work to prepare and create the Festival do an amazing job, including the numerous volunteers. We look forward to reviewing the films of Sundance 2025, when we can return to the hills of Utah once more.