

Sundance festival lineup announced

Several Canadian documentaries on the bill at January showcase for independent film

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LOS ANGELES—Films featuring Winona Ryder, Nick Nolte, Anjelica Huston and Paul Giamatti will be among those competing for top honours at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

The lineup announced Wednesday for Sundance, a key showcase for independent film, also included several Canadian documentaries, as well as American pieces on writer Hunter S. Thompson, musician Patti Smith and filmmakers Roman Polanski and Derek Jarman.

The National Film Board of Canada is sending two of its co-productions to the festival held in Park City, Utah. Patrick Reed's documentary *Triage: Dr. James Orbinski's Humanitarian Dilemma* and Yung Chang's *Up the Yangtze* will screen in the festival's world cinema documentary competition, the NFB announced Wednesday.

Reed's film, a collaboration with Toronto's White Pine Pictures, follows Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. James Orbinski to Somalia, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The feature, produced by Peter Raymont, had its world premiere recently at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam.

Chang's piece, co-produced with EyeSteelFilm, follows the Yu family as they try to recoup from the flooding of the Three Gorges Dam. It's the first feature film for the Chinese-Canadian writer-director.

Both films "look at the human spirit during times of massive change and crises," the NFB said in a release.

Taking place Jan. 17-27, Sundance chose 16 titles in its dramatic competition for American fictional films, including director Geoff Haley's *The Last Word*, starring Ryder, Wes Bentley and Ray Romano in a romance about a writer who crafts suicide notes for other people.

Also competing in a lineup heavy on tales of families at odds: Rawson Thurber's *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh*, with Nolte, Sienna Miller, Peter Sarsgaard and Jon Foster in the story of a young man with a gangster father who goes soul-searching after college; Clark Gregg's *Choke* with Huston and Sam Rockwell in a mother-and-son tale; and Paul Schneider's *Pretty Bird* with Giamatti and Billy Crudup in a dark comic narrative of entrepreneurs trying to invent a rocket belt.

Another entry in the U.S. dramatic competition: Christine Jeffs's *Sunshine Cleaning*, the story of an enterprising mother and her reluctant sister who try their hand at the crime-scene cleanup business. It stars Amy Adams, Emily Blunt, Alan Arkin and Amy Redford, daughter of Sundance Institute founder Robert Redford.

The 16 documentaries in the U.S. competition feature Alex Gibney's *Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson*, Marina Zenovich's *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*, about the Academy Award-winning director of *The Pianist* and *Chinatown* who fled the United States in 1978 over child-sex charges; and *Patti Smith: Dream of Life*, Steven Sebring's study of the music icon.

The Women of Brukman (Les Femmes de la Brukman), directed by Canadian Isaac Isitan, is also in the lineup. The piece profiles workers who take over a Buenos Aires men's clothing factory during Argentina's financial collapse.

Other Sundance documentaries include Isaac Julien's *Derek Jarman*, a look at the work of the British experimental filmmaker; Edet Belzberg's *An American Soldier*, which examines U.S. army recruitment tactics; Patrick Creadon's *I.O.U.S.A.*, an exploration of America's fiscal straits; and Jackie Reem Salloum's *Slingshot Hip Hop*, a chronicle of Palestinians using protest rap in the struggle with Israel.