

# **IFP's 19<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GOTHAM INDEPENDENT FILM AWARDS™**

## **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS** **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2009 AT 5PM EST**

### **ABOUT IFP**

After debuting with a program in the 1979 New York Film Festival, the nonprofit IFP has evolved into the nation's oldest and largest organization of independent filmmakers, and also the premier advocate for them. Since its start, IFP has supported the production of 7,000 films and provided resources to more than 20,000 filmmakers--voices that otherwise might not have been heard. IFP believes that independent films enrich the universal language of cinema, seeding the global culture with new ideas, kindling awareness, and fostering activism. The organization has fostered early work by leading filmmakers including Charles Burnett, Edward Burns, Jim Jarmusch, Barbara Kopple, Michael Moore, Mira Nair and Kevin Smith.

Currently, IFP represents a network of 10,000 filmmakers in New York City and around the world. Through its workshops, seminars, conferences, mentorships, and *Filmmaker Magazine*, IFP schools its members in the art, technology, and business of independent filmmaking (there are special programs to promote racial, ethnic, religious, ideological, gender, and sexual diversity). IFP builds audiences by hosting screenings—often in collaboration with other cultural institutions—and also bestows the Gotham Awards™, the first honors of the film awards season. When all is said and done, IFP fosters the development of 200 feature and documentary films each year.

### **ABOUT THE GOTHAM INDEPENDENT FILM AWARDS™**

The Gotham Independent Film Awards™ are selected by distinguished juries and presented in New York City, the home of independent film. This public showcase honors the independent filmmaking community, expands the audience for independent films, and supports the work that IFP does behind the scenes throughout the year to bring such films to fruition. The Awards began in 1991.

### **BASIC CRITERIA FOR ALL COMPETITIVE AWARDS**

There will be six (6) competitive awards in 2009 – Best Feature, Best Documentary, Best Ensemble Performance, Breakthrough Actor, Breakthrough Director and Best Film Not Playing at a Theater Near You®. All eligible submissions must meet the following basic criteria for competitive awards:

■ **Filmmaking with a point of view.**

IFP believes that filmmaking is a subjective art form. Each Gotham Independent Film Award™ will be given to individual films or performers in films where the vision of an individual director, producer, writer or writer/director is abundantly evident, and where the film cannot be classically defined as a “work for hire.”

■ **Feature-length (defined as over 60 minutes).**

■ **Films made with an economy of means.**

■ **Films must be American.**

The film must be directed and/or produced by a US born or based filmmaker.

■ **Screening availability by the Nominating Committee.**

The film must be submitted on DVD by the deadline or made available for screening by nominating committee.

■ **Independent Distribution.**

All films must be scheduled for a theatrical release during calendar year 2009 (Midnight January 1 – 11:59 pm December 31). The release can be through a specialty division of a studio, an independent distributor, or via self-distribution. The film must be screened for paid admission in a commercial motion picture theatre in New York City and/or Los Angeles County. The film must run for at least seven consecutive days. The film must be advertised and marketed during the New York and/or Los Angeles County run in a manner considered normal and customary to the industry. The film must be publicly exhibited by means of 16mm, 35mm or 70mm film, or in a digital format, delivered to the screen by an image and sound file format suitable for exhibition in existing commercial cinema sites. **(Note: The only exceptions to these mandatory eligibility criteria are in the “Breakthrough Director” and “Best Film Not Playing At A Theater Near You®” categories. See specific guidelines below for alternative criteria on these two categories.)**

#### ADDITIONAL CRITERIA BY CATEGORY

**BEST FEATURE** – an exceptionally realized fiction film that raises the possibilities of filmmaking and that will withstand the test of time. The Gotham Independent Film Award will be presented to the film’s credited director(s) and producer(s).

**BEST DOCUMENTARY** - an exceptionally realized non-fiction film that deals creatively with cultural, artistic, historical, social, scientific, economic or other subject matter. The objective is to recognize the significant artistic and/or social impact of the director’s vision. It may be photographed in actual occurrence, or may employ partial re-enactment, stock footage, stills, animation, stop-motion or other techniques, as long as the emphasis is on fact and not fiction. The Gotham Independent Film Award will be presented to the film’s credited director(s) and producer(s).

**BEST ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE** – an outstanding performance by a group of actors who create a unique cinematic chemistry in a specific film. In order to be eligible, the film must have a minimum of three (3) roles of equal significance in the film, without one of the actors being a discernable lead. The objective is to recognize the collaboration of the actors, not just the appearance of a great cast of performers. The Gotham Independent Film Award will be presented to the ensemble actors as determined by the submitting entity on their application.

**BREAKTHROUGH ACTOR** - an outstanding debut or “breakthrough” performance. The actor’s performance is not necessarily the actor’s first role, but is considered the first to display the expanse of his/her talent. The actor’s role must be a lead, or a strong supporting character in a specific film. The Gotham Independent Film Award will be presented to the actor.

**BREAKTHROUGH DIRECTOR** - a filmmaker whose first fiction film pushes the boundaries of creativity and demonstrates a unique vision. Eligible films could have been released theatrically in 2009 – OR – showcased at one of the following film festivals in 2009: Sundance, Rotterdam, Berlin, Cannes or Toronto. The Gotham Independent Film Award will be presented to the film’s credited director(s).

**BEST FILM NOT PLAYING AT A THEATER NEAR YOU®** – IFP believes it is critical to recognize amongst its modest number of competitive awards a film that has achieved critical acclaim from the festival circuit, but has not yet been released theatrically by a distributor or been self-distributed. **Feature-length fiction and non-fiction films are eligible in this**

category. **Note: Consideration is solely via recommendation by a committee comprised of US festival programmers and film critics. The final 5 nominees and winner are selected by the editors of *Filmmaker* magazine and a curator from The Museum of Modern Art. All nominees are screened for the public in November 19 – 22 as part of a showcase series at MoMA.** The Gotham Independent Film Award™ will be presented to the film's credited director(s) and producer(s).

## OUR SELECTION PROCESS

### ■ **Nominating Committees**

Committees comprised of film critics, festival programmers and others not directly engaged in the production and distribution of films will review all materials and determine the final nominees in each of the competitive categories. **Nominees in all categories will be announced on Monday October 19.**

### ■ **Final Selection Juries**

A final jury of distinguished filmmakers will determine the winners in each category. Final juries are frequently comprised of directors, writers, producers, casting directors, editors, actors, directors of photography and others directly associated with making films. Executives of companies which release or sell films do not participate in the selection process at any stage. **All winners will be announced live at the 2009 Gotham Independent Film Awards™ on Monday November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**

## SUBMISSION APPLICATION

Applicants must complete and submit their application forms by 5pm EST on Monday, September 21, 2009. Applications are available at <http://gotham.ifp.org>. For additional queries, please email: [GothamAwardJury@ifp.org](mailto:GothamAwardJury@ifp.org).