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SXSW FILM ANNOUNCES AVA DUVERNAY AND RZA AS 2015 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Austin, Texas – December 16, 2014 – The South by Southwest (SXSW) Film Conference and Festival revealed two additional Keynote speakers today for the 2015 event: Golden Globe-nominated filmmaker Ava DuVernay and visionary artist RZA. Joining previously announced Keynote Mark Duplass, DuVernay and RZA exemplify the entrepreneurial, risk-taking DIY spirit of SXSW while seamlessly working across various disciplines. Each keynote session is held at 11:00am from Saturday, March 14 - Tuesday, March 17, 2015. The SXSW Film Conference and Festival will take place March 13 - 21, 2015 in Austin, Texas.

“Ava DuVernay’s career evolution is fascinating. She began directing independent films while running her own successful marketing firm before expanding into distribution and now, she is helming a groundbreaking studio picture. Her passion, fearlessness, and excellence are extraordinary,” commented Head of SXSW Film Janet Pierson. “RZA may seem like a somewhat out-of-the-box choice for a Film keynote given his prominence as a musician. What is inspiring is how his love of film has informed his entire career and creativity. We’re intrigued by his increasing work as a multi-hyphenated filmmaker, actor and curator.”

Ava DuVernay

Winner of the 2012 Sundance Film Festival Best Director Award and the John Cassavetes Independent Spirit Award for her second narrative feature *Middle of Nowhere*, Ava DuVernay is a writer, producer, director and distributor of independent film. DuVernay’s directorial work includes *I Will Follow*, *Venus Vs.*, *This is the Life* and *Scandal*. Her upcoming film *Selma*, nominated for four Golden Globe Awards including Best Director, chronicles the historic 1965 voting rights campaign led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. DuVernay is founder of AFFRM, a film distribution collective dedicated to African-American cinema. She sits on the boards of Film Independent and the Sundance Institute.

RZA

RZA is a multi-Grammy® award-winning producer, BAFTA nominated film composer, recording artist and actor. He is a prominent figure in hip hop music and the creator/producer of the Wu-Tang Clan. RZA has scored for filmmakers Ridley Scott, Jim Jarmusch, Michael Mann and Quentin Tarantino. He also scored the Emmy-nominated American adaptation of the Japanese anime *Afro Samurai*, executive produced by and starring Samuel L. Jackson. RZA’s on-screen credits include: *Mr. Right*, *Gang Related*, *The Man With the Iron Fists*, *American Gangster*, *Funny People*, *Due Date*, *The Next Three Days* and *G.I. Joe 2*.

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In addition to nine full days of film screenings, SXSW Film will ultimately feature over 150 informative and entertaining Keynotes, Featured Sessions, panels, workshops and mentor sessions. The program presents topics that cover the film spectrum, with an emphasis on the intersection of the Film, Interactive and Music worlds. The final Film Keynote speaker, complete Conference lineup and additional Convergence Programming (open to more than one badge type) including Digital Domain, Future of TV and SXsports sessions, will be announced in early 2015. For more information, go to sxsw.com/film.

Register for a SXSW badge today at sxsw.com/attend, and join us March 13 – 21, 2015 for unparalleled access to all these sessions, screenings, parties, the SXSW Trade Show and, of course, a creative and inspirational experience that only SXSW can deliver. Be sure to register soon, and gain access to conveniently located hotels. Register by 11:59pm CT on Friday, January 16 and save up to 10% off the walk-up rate.

About SXSW Film

Every March, creatives of all stripes gather in Austin to witness, share and inspire the visions that will galvanize the filmmakers and ideas of tomorrow. SXSW Film Conference & Festival champions the vitality, innovation and opportunity that drives the entertainment and media landscape, and boldly tackles the evolution of all aspects of “film” today, down to its very definition. A nexus of discovery and collaborative energy, SXSW Film celebrates the art and business of the possible.

SXSW is proud to be an official qualifying festival for the Academy Awards® Short Film competition. The Best Narrative Short, Best Documentary Short and Best Animated Short winners become eligible for the Academy Awards. SXSW 2015 is sponsored by Miller Lite, Esurance, AT&T, IFC, Mazda, Monster Energy and The Austin Chronicle.

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Press Credentials: We are accepting applications for 2015 SXSW Press Credentials at www.sxsw.com/press. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, February 11, 2015 and walk-up requests will not be granted.

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