

**ROBERT REDFORD TO RECEIVE THE GISH PRIZE,
ONE OF THE LARGEST AWARDS IN THE ARTS
The 2008 Gish Prize Will Support Efforts of the Redford Center at Sundance Preserve**

**15th ANNIVERSARY
THE DOROTHY AND LILLIAN GISH PRIZE
November 12, 2008, New York City**

It is my desire... to give the recipients of the prize the recognition they deserve, to bring attention to their contributions to society and encourage others to follow in their path—Lillian Gish

New York (October 17, 2008)—Filmmaker, activist, and Sundance Institute founder **Robert Redford** has been chosen to receive the prestigious **2008 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize**, one of the largest awards in the arts. The selection was announced today by **The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize Trust** (JPMorgan Chase Bank, Trustee) and the Gish Prize committee. Redford will join friends and colleagues at a special Gish Prize ceremony on November 12, 2008, at the Hudson Theatre, Millennium Broadway, Times Square, New York City. The Gish Prize includes a silver medallion and an approximately \$325,000 legacy from silent film stars Dorothy and Lillian Gish.

In her will, Lillian Gish specified that the prize should be awarded annually to “a man or woman who has made an outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world and to mankind’s enjoyment and understanding of life.” Now in its 15th year, the Gish Prize continues to reflect the spirit of the pioneering Gish sisters, paying tribute to artistic trailblazers who have redefined their craft and pushed the boundaries of excellence in their field. Gish Prize recipients have shaped the cultural landscape in drama, music, dance, art, architecture, lighting design, film, and literature. (See full list of Gish Prize recipients below.)

To mark the 15th anniversary of the Gish Prize, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) will present screenings of a new print of D. W. Griffith’s *Hearts of the World* (1918) on Sunday, November 2, at 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, November 16, at 2:00 p.m. Restoration of this classic was funded by **The Lillian Gish Trust for Film Preservation**, another example of the Gish sisters’ support for the arts that extends beyond the annual Gish Prize. MoMA has one of the largest holdings of Lillian Gish films. The collection includes all of the surviving titles made under the direction of D.W. Griffith and for the Biograph Company. Ms. Gish endowed The Lillian Gish Film Preservation Fund at MoMA to ensure the continuing preservation and availability of films made by herself, her sister Dorothy, and D. W. Griffith.

The 15th anniversary Gish Prize celebration will also feature a special panel discussion at MoMA on Wednesday, November 12 with former Gish Prize winners. The panel will explore the challenges

facing artists across all disciplines and discuss how the Gish Prize and other endowments have supported the creation of new artistic works and ideas. For information, visit www.moma.org/film.

Robert Redford, the 2008 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize recipient, is being recognized for his pivotal role in the arts not only as a creative force, but also as a tireless supporter of emerging talent, independent endeavors, and the environment through his multidisciplinary Sundance Institute. In more ways than one, Redford's career clearly articulates the Gish sisters' values and the meaning of the prize.

"This award has special resonance for me," says Redford. "Twenty-seven years ago, when I received the Academy Award for *Ordinary People*, it was Lillian Gish who presented me with the Oscar. It was an honor then, as it is now with the Gish Prize. I am grateful to be following in the footsteps of the legendary Gish sisters, two true pioneers of American film. Sundance in a way continues their work, reaffirming their passion for art and film and their importance to life."

Redford's work has made "Sundance" synonymous with independent, groundbreaking vision. It remains the core mission of all Sundance entities, including Sundance Channel, Cinema Centers, Catalog and Resort, and is most widely known in association with the Sundance Institute. Today, the Institute has programs in film, documentary, film music and theatre, while the Sundance Film Festival remains the world's largest showcase of American independent cinema and one of the most influential stages for film. Since its inception in 1981, the Institute has supported—through its various labs and funds—directors, screenwriters, composers and playwrights from around the world. Redford's work has fostered a whole generation of American film and theatre artists, and his impact can be seen in the number of Sundance-supported projects that have gone on to achieve widespread acclaim including the recent Tony Award-winning Broadway hit *Passing Strange*, indie film successes such as *Boys Don't Cry* (1999) and *Half-Nelson* (2006), and documentaries like *Hoop Dreams* (1994), which made the industry sit up and realize the value of non-fiction films.

In addition, this same independent and groundbreaking vision has been the hallmark of Redford's public policy work as evidenced by The Redford Center at Sundance Preserve. A culmination of 25 years of public policy and other transformational work, the Redford Center is about new ideas. It is devoted to a distinct brand of problem solving, which embraces the belief that creativity and innovation are at the core of any significant social or sector change. The Center applies its well-tested and unique formula to the equally unique challenges of the 21st Century.

Redford will use his Gish Prize award to support the transformational work of The Redford Center, which uses various forms of creative expression in its ongoing policy development work. The Center has utilized documentary films and programs like the Brave New Voices project as tools for informing, invigorating, and mobilizing communities, empowering them to seek change on issues ranging from education to the environment.

The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize

The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize is one of the largest awards in the arts. Nominations are welcomed from the arts community and may be submitted through the Gish Prize website, www.gishprize.com. The Gish Prize committee, a group that changes every year, considers all nominations and chooses each recipient. Composed of leaders in the arts community, the committee for this year includes **Agnes Gund**, President Emerita, The Museum of Modern Art; **Patricia Cruz**, executive director, Harlem Stage/Aaron Davis Hall; **Pete Hamill**, author; **Hugh Hardy**, architect; and **David Henry Hwang**, playwright.

The Gish Prize was established in 1994 by The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize Trust and is administered by JPMorgan Chase Bank as trustee. Stars of the silent screen, Dorothy and Lillian Gish brought their unique sensibilities and talents to early film, shaping the development of that art form. The sisters made their motion picture debut together in D.W. Griffith's *An Unseen Enemy* in 1912 and went on to appear in over 100 films each. They also received accolades for their work on stage and in television. Lillian Gish died in 1993 and Dorothy Gish died in 1968. Their legacy lives on today in the Gish Prize, and in their desire "...to give the recipients of the prize the recognition they deserve, to bring attention to their contributions to society and encourage others to follow in their path."

Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize Recipients

2008 **Robert Redford**, filmmaker, activist, Sundance Institute founder
2007 **Laurie Anderson**, multimedia performance artist
2006 **Shirin Neshat**, visual artist and filmmaker
2005 **Peter Sellars**, theatre and opera director
2004 **Ornette Coleman**, jazz innovator
2003 **Bill T. Jones**, dancer/choreographer
2002 **Lloyd Richards**, theatre director
2001 **Jennifer Tipton**, lighting designer
2000 **Merce Cunningham**, dancer/choreographer
1999 **Arthur Miller**, author/playwright
1998 **Isabel Allende**, author
1997 **Bob Dylan**, singer/songwriter
1996 **Robert Wilson**, artist/director
1995 **Ingmar Bergman**, film director
1994 **Frank Gehry**, architect

Robert Redford, 2008 Gish Prize Recipient

Robert Redford's breakout role in 1969's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* proclaimed him a star and even provided a name for his ranch in Utah, which he would transform into that beacon of creativity called Sundance. Today, Redford is known internationally for his iconic work in front of and behind the camera, and as an activist and philanthropist, whose passions range from fine art, film and theatre to Native American, human rights and environmental issues.

Redford's life has always revolved around the arts. He first aspired to be an artist, studying painting before venturing into acting. Spanning half a century, Redford's on-screen career reflects his extraordinary range and includes memorable roles in comedies, romances, Westerns, political thrillers and dramas. In 1980, he stepped behind the camera for his directorial debut, winning an Academy Award for *Ordinary People*. He went on to direct seven other films including 1994's *Quiz Show*, for which he was again nominated for an Oscar. At the same time he began taking the reins as producer as well. His most recent film, 2007's *Lions for Lambs*, featured Redford in all three roles as actor, director and producer.

Early in his career, Redford began formulating a plan to create a force for artistic development that would go far beyond his personal needs. Beginning with two acres of land in Utah, Redford would eventually build Sundance, summer home to the Sundance Institute. Today, it is an artistic sanctuary with over 5,000 permanently protected acres of pristine wilderness. Here, in the remote natural setting and removed from the pressures of the marketplace, Redford created a community where emerging and established filmmakers, playwrights and composers could come together to explore their independent vision in an atmosphere of collaboration. Many of most compelling films and plays of the past decades have been incubated and premiered at Sundance, which has become a key resource for independent film and theatre artists not only in the U.S. but around the world as well.

"Sundance created an opportunity of education through work that didn't exist before," says Redford. Today, the Institute fills that void and Redford's vision continues to influence and shape the American independent film and theatre landscape and beyond in the work of the Redford Center at Sundance Preserve and other Sundance entities.