

NEW SEASON OF PBS SERIES *INDEPENDENT LENS* LAUNCHES WITH HIT DOCUMENTARY “WORDPLAY”

Oscar-nominated actor Terrence Howard Returns As Host of Sixth Season

Series’ National Community Outreach to Focus on Democracy During the Election Year

(San Francisco, CA)—[Independent Lens](#), the Emmy Award®-winning PBS series, once again hosted by the Oscar-nominated actor Terrence Howard, will return for a sixth season this fall on Tuesday, October 16 at 10:00 PM with the broadcast premiere of the box office hit **WORDPLAY**. The acclaimed anthology series will be supported by a new public education campaign on democracy and a third season of the landmark Community Cinema program, bringing free community screening events to 50 cities each month.

Independent Lens will kick-off with **WORDPLAY** which follows *New York Times* puzzle editor Will Shortz, the man behind America’s crossword obsession. Director Patrick Creadon introduces us to this passionate hero and to the inner workings of his brilliant contributors and fans, including such crossword aficionados as Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, Jon Stewart, Ken Burns, Mike Mussina and the Indigo Girls.

Other highlights of the upcoming season include the box office hit, **AN UNREASONABLE MAN**, which documents the life and times of Ralph Nader; **BANISHED**, which explores the ugly history of American towns that violently expelled their African American communities; **MISS NAVAJO**, a look at a unique Native American pageant that challenges mainstream ideas of beauty by focusing on the traditional Navajo woman—including mastering the Navajo language and the butchering of sheep; **KING CORN**, which follows two college graduates as they embark on a mission to see where America's food comes from and challenge the role of subsidies and agro-business by growing it themselves; **IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA**, which offers an intimate documentary that goes behind-the-scenes with Africa's first female head of state, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; and **MAPPING STEM CELL RESEARCH: Terra Incognita**, which chronicles a prominent neurologist's journey to find a cure for his paralyzed daughter.

“This seasons programs are a powerful reflection of the diversity of programming on *Independent Lens*—we really are a film festival in your living room,” said Series Producer Lois Vossen.

“The quality of this series is consistently first-rate,” said *Independent Lens* host and acclaimed actor Terrence Howard. “I’ve learned so much by watching these stories from all over the world and if I can help bring more people to these films, it’s an honor.”

Continuing the series’ ongoing effort to showcase international documentaries on American television, the *Independent Lens* fall slate includes **PLEASE VOTE FOR ME**, a surprising lesson in democracy that arises when three eight-year-old students—a charismatic challenger, a ruthless incumbent, and a thoughtful outsider—all campaign for the coveted position of “class monitor” in a third grade classroom in Wuhan, China.

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PLEASE VOTE FOR ME is part of an unprecedented international documentary series entitled “Why Democracy?” commissioned by Steps International to explore emerging and diverging notions of democracy. The film’s October broadcast on *Independent Lens* is timed to coincide with broadcasts in more than 60 countries around the world—Denmark, South Africa, Germany, France, U.K., The Netherlands, Japan, Canada, Poland, Australia, Sweden, and Greece, among others. An estimated audience of a 150 million viewers will watch the broadcasts, creating a unique global viewing experience that will engage audiences worldwide on issues of democracy. Another film from the “Why Democracy?” project, **IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA**, will air on *Independent Lens* later in the season. For more information, visit www.whymocracy.net.

PLEASE VOTE FOR ME also launches a yearlong public education campaign on democracy that will accompany the *Independent Lens* season. Leveraging the timely content of programs like **AN UNREASONABLE MAN** and **IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA**, the ITVS-led national community engagement campaign will seek to promote voter registration and stimulate discussion around ideas of democracy throughout the season.

“These new initiatives provide ways to engage our viewing audience beyond the broadcast of these timely documentaries,” said Vossen. “The democracy campaign is just one way for us to use the series as a powerful resource for public education and community engagement—and of course for entertainment.”

Independent Lens will resume its national Community Cinema program—the monthly screening series featuring nine upcoming selections from *Independent Lens*. Launching in September, Community Cinema’s third season brings together local public television stations and leading community organizations to hold monthly screenings in more than 40 markets across the country connecting communities with organizations, information and the opportunity to get involved around the topics presented in the films. More than 400 events are planned for the coming season nationwide. For more , visit <http://www.itvs.org/outreach>.

For a complete line-up of the fall 2007/2008 schedule and downloadable images visit:
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/>

Click below to view a trailer of the shows premiering this season on *Independent Lens*.

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=QY7H5AIZByg>

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About The Independent Television Service (ITVS) and *Independent Lens*

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) celebrated its 15th Anniversary in 2006. ITVS is a leading funder and presenter of award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens*. Airing Tuesday nights at 10: 00 PM on PBS, *Independent Lens* is a film festival in your living room. Hosted each week by independent film actor, Terrence Howard, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of independent producers. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts.

About PBS

PBS is a media enterprise that serves 354 public noncommercial television stations and reaches almost 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS' premier kids TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (**pbskids.org**), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

CONTACT:

Voleine Amilcar, ITVS 415-356-8383 x 244 voleine_amilcar@itvs.org

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