

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Voleine Amilcar, *Independent Lens* 415-356-8383 x 244 voleine_amilcar@itvs.org

Pressroom for more information and/or downloadable images:
<http://www.pbs.org/pressroom/>

**EMMY® AWARD-WINNING PBS SERIES *Independent Lens*
TO SHOWCASE TWO POWERFUL FILMS ABOUT RACE AT THE
JANUARY 2009 TELEVISION CRITICS ASSOCIATION PRESS TOUR**

**Two-Part Panel to Feature *CRIPS AND BLOODS: Made in L.A.*
and *TULIA, TEXAS***

(San Francisco, CA)—Independent Television Service's Emmy® Award-winning series *Independent Lens* will be prominently featured as part of the PBS lineup at the upcoming Television Critics Association (TCA) press tour scheduled for January 2009 in Beverly Hills, California. *Independent Lens*, hosted by Terrence Howard and now in its seventh consecutive season, airs nationally on PBS October through June.

Two powerful films about race will be featured at the January press tour: acclaimed director Stacy Peralta's ***CRIPS AND BLOODS: Made in L.A.***, the first film to examine the decades-long gang strife in South Central Los Angeles as a war on the scale of Kosovo, and ***TULIA, TEXAS***, a story of racial injustice perpetrated by a lone lawmaker in the war on drugs.

"These are two groundbreaking films that explore the impact of race in America and how race still shapes the American experience, from urban L.A. to small-town Texas," said series producer Lois Vossen. "Both films are in-depth investigations into very unique communities, and we think that pairing these films and filmmakers will make for a provocative panel." Panelists will include ***CRIPS AND BLOODS: Made in L.A.*** director Peralta and ***TULIA, TEXAS*** co-directors Cassandra Herrman and Kelly Whalen, along with Vossen.

Narrated by Forest Whitaker, ***CRIPS AND BLOODS: Made in L.A.*** provides a historical and sociological context for the rise of the devastating gang violence in South Los Angeles; the film will air on *Independent Lens* in May 2009. Peralta, whose previous films *Riding Giants* and *Dogtown and Z Boys* also explored the cultures of young male tribes, tracks the ascension of gangs through a history of South Central L.A., a once-peaceful African American neighborhood. Young black men, shut out of youth organizations like the all-white Boy Scouts in the 1950s, formed their own clubs and used their fists to rule the streets. Today, South Central L.A. is one of the most violent places in the world—the stress levels of its children measure higher than those of children in Iraq.

Combining unprecedented access to active gangs from neighborhoods all over South Los Angeles, contemporary interviews, political and social commentary, and current and rare archival footage, ***CRIPS AND BLOODS: Made in L.A.*** transcends the typical lurid exposé style and offers a compelling, character-driven documentary narrative that chronicles the decades-long cycle of destruction and despair that defines modern gang culture.

-More-

Directed by Cassandra Herrman and Kelly Whalen, **TULIA, TEXAS** will premiere in February 2009. A powerful story of justice gone awry, the film tells about what happened when narcotics agent Tom Coleman was hired to work undercover in a now-infamous drug sting operation in Tulia, Texas, as part of the nation's "war on drugs." In 1999, Coleman executed one of the biggest drug busts in Texas history; in one day, dozens of residents of the small town had been arrested. Thirty-nine of the 46 people accused of selling drugs to Coleman were African American. Named "Texas Lawman of the Year" for his investigation, Coleman's arrests led to quick trials and severe sentences. But it soon became clear that there was more to Coleman than met the eye, and revelations came forward calling into question many of the arrests.

Told through interviews with the accused, Coleman, and the police officers, jurors, lawyers, families and activists involved, **TULIA, TEXAS** takes viewers from the personal to the political and back again. The film explores how one part of the community consented to systematic prejudice while another was unwilling to sit back quietly as their neighbors were victimized by one overzealous rogue drug agent and the culture that celebrated him. **TULIA, TEXAS** tells the story of a small town's search for justice and explores how the war on drugs actually plays out in communities across the country.

The *Independent Lens* TCA Panel will take place on Wednesday, January 7, 2009, at 5:15 PM at the Hilton Los Angeles/Universal City.

* * *