



PRESS RELEASE

## Sony Future Filmmaker Awards Announces Jury of 2025 Edition

**NOVEMBER 21, 2024** – Creo is pleased to announce the jury of industry-leading experts for the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2025, which returns for its third edition at Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City **June 2-5, 2025**.

Established by Creo in partnership with Sony, the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards continue on their mission to elevate original voices from around the world with a fresh perspective on storytelling. Each year the shortlisted filmmakers are flown to Los Angeles for an extensive program of workshops, screenings and events, creating meaningful opportunities to expand their networks and equipping them with the tools to push forward their careers. Building on the success of its first two editions, the major program for filmmakers continues to welcome budding cinematic talent from across the globe; the competition is free to enter and open for submissions until **December 12, 2024**.

The jury for the 2025 edition of the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards brings together a panel of leading lights from the world of cinema: acclaimed filmmaker and writer **Minhal Baig** (*We Grown Now, Hala, BoJack Horseman*); President of 3000 Pictures **Elizabeth Gabler** (*Where the Crawdads Sing*, upcoming *Klara and the Sun, Life of Pi*); Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker **Jason Reitman** (*Saturday Night, Ghostbusters: Afterlife, Juno*); and award-winning director **Justin Chadwick** (*Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom, The Other Boleyn Girl, Shardlake*) who returns as jury chair for the third year running.

**Justin Chadwick, award-winning theater, television and film director and Chair of the Jury** said: *“Last year’s shortlist selection illuminated the talent of thirty filmmakers who transformed their visions into captivating stories, bringing them into the heart of moviemaking in Los Angeles where they gained invaluable awareness of our ever-evolving industry. With this year’s competition, we are looking for projects that hold the potential not only to change the lives of these filmmakers but also to provoke and compel us as viewers to alter our outlooks. I am grateful to return for the third year as Chair and I speak for the jury when I say how excited we are to discover the creativity and passion which the 2025 competition will surely bring.”*

This year’s 30 shortlisted filmmakers will be announced on **April 29, 2025**, and flown to Los Angeles for an extensive four-day program at the iconic Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, from **June 2-5, 2025**. The 2025 program is set to offer the shortlisted filmmakers hands-on workshops and industry intuition from top professionals; giving filmmakers an opportunity to hear practical advice from expert speakers as well as the opportunity to connect with their peers across a week of engaging and interactive sessions. Led by Sony Pictures executives, the filmmakers are given backstage access; covering a range of topics from keynotes by major cinematographers, screenings and Q&A sessions, to working with talent agencies and using cutting-edge technologies and animation, film scoring and

music rights. The event will culminate in an awards ceremony on **June 5, 2025**, where the four category winners will be revealed and rewarded with cash prizes and Sony digital imaging equipment.

The Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2025 edition comprises four core categories for filmmakers to enter: **Fiction, Non-Fiction, Animation** and **Student**. In response to the remarkable volume and quality of submissions last year, in 2025 the Fiction and Non-Fiction shortlists are expanded to include 10 filmmakers each, allowing for an even greater scope of original narratives and documentaries to be recognised as part of the wider shortlist of 30.

Additional initiatives include the Sustainability Prize, set up by Creo and Sony to reward a film which communicates on key themes linked to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and Future Format – championing a new generation of aspiring filmmakers by welcoming short films shot exclusively on a smartphone.

For more information and further details of the categories of the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards 2025, please visit [sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com](https://sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

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Established by Creo and sponsored by Sony, the **Sony Future Filmmaker Awards** is a major annual awards program for short films devoted to supporting and elevating independent filmmakers and creators from across the globe. Set apart by its exceptional prize, the Awards provide successful filmmakers with invaluable opportunities in the form of a trip to Los Angeles and to the historic Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, California, where they gain exclusive access to experts and unparalleled insight into the inner workings of the industry. Winners additionally receive cash prizes and a range of Sony Digital Imaging equipment. Free to enter, the Awards comprise four categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Student and Animation, and are judged by a panel of leading figures. By supporting talents in film, video and storytelling, the Sony Future Filmmaker Awards provides a gateway for the development of creative excellence. [www.sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com](https://www.sonyfuturefilmmakerawards.com)

**Creo** initiates and organizes events and programming across three key strands: photography, film and contemporary art. Since 2007 Creo's mission has been to develop meaningful opportunities for creatives and to expand the reach of its cultural activities. Its flagship projects include the Sony World Photography Awards, Sony Future Filmmaker Awards, PHOTOFAIRS and Photo London. Working in partnership with Angus Montgomery Arts (AMA), Creo helps deliver the group's ventures, comprising some of the world's leading art fairs. Taking its name from the Latin for "I create," it is in this spirit that Creo sets out to empower and give agency to creative voices. [www.creoarts.com](https://www.creoarts.com)

**Sony Corporation** is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Group Corporation and is responsible for the Entertainment, Technology & Services (ET&S) business. With the mission to "create the future of

entertainment through the power of technology together with creators,” we aim to continue to deliver Kando\* to people around the world. For more information, visit: [www.sony.net](http://www.sony.net).

*\*Kando is a Japanese word that roughly translates to the sense of awe and emotion you feel when experiencing something beautiful and amazing for the first time.*

**Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE)** is a subsidiary of Tokyo-based Sony Group Corporation. SPE’s global operations encompass motion picture production, acquisition, and distribution; television production acquisition, and distribution; television networks; digital content creation and distribution; operation of studio facilities; and development of new entertainment products, services and technologies. Sony Pictures Television operates dozens of wholly-owned or joint-venture production companies around the world. SPE’s Motion Picture Group production organizations include Columbia Pictures, Screen Gems, TriStar Pictures, 3000 Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation, Stage 6 Films, AFFIRM Films, Sony Pictures International Productions, and Sony Pictures Classics. For more information, visit [www.sonypictures.com/corp/divisions](http://www.sonypictures.com/corp/divisions).

## 2025 JUDGES

**Minhal Baig** is a filmmaker. Her latest feature, *We Grown Now*, about two boys growing up in a Cabrini-Green high rise, premiered at the 2023 Toronto International Film Festival, awarded the TIFF Changemaker Award and Audience Award at Chicago International Film Festival and received Best Picture, Best Cinematography and Best Editing nominations for the 2024 Independent Spirit Awards. Sony Pictures Classics releases the film theatrically in spring 2024. Her previous feature, *Hala*, about a Pakistani-American Muslim teenager uncovering a secret about her family, premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival and was released by Apple. She had a two-year overall writing-producing deal in television with Amazon, is a 2022 Sundance Momentum Fellow and a graduate of the 2022 WGA Showrunner Training Program. She also served as co-executive producer on *Criminal*, story editor on *BoJack Horseman* and staff writer on Peabody-award winning half-hour comedy *Ramy*. Her work has been supported by fellowships/residencies at Yaddo and The Black List.

**Justin Chadwick** is an award-winning British theater, television and film director. He is best known for critically acclaimed films including the Academy Award®, BAFTA and Golden Globe-nominated *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* (2013), the AFI and IFTA nominated *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008); *Tulip Fever* (2017) and *The First Grader* (2010). His films have won numerous awards including the Audience Award at Durban International Film Festival, the Audience Prize for Best Film at Doha Tribeca Film Festival, both Best Director’s Choice and Audience Choice Awards at the Sedona Film Festival, and Best Feature Film at the Palm Beach Film Festival 2010. His award-winning short films include *Boy* (2011), *Shakespeare Shorts* (1996) and *Family Style* (1993). His recent credits include the Disney+ series *Shardlake* (2024), the upcoming film *Sierra Madre* starring Kiefer Sutherland, and Amazon’s *Fear*, currently in production.

**Elizabeth Gabler** is the President of 3000 Pictures, a multi-media division at Sony Pictures Entertainment, which she formed in 2019. This company represents a partnership between Sony Pictures, HarperCollins Publishers, and what was formerly Fox 2000. 3000 Pictures focuses primarily on literary adaptations, both fiction and non-fiction for theatrical and streaming feature films, as well as television. The first film under the 3000 banner was the adaptation of the publishing phenomenon, *Where the Crawdads Sing*, which grossed more than \$140 million globally. An adaptation of *Lady*

*Chatterley's Lover* for Sony and Netflix premiered on the streamer and remained in the Global Top 10 for three weeks in a row, reaching over 60 million hours viewed. Upcoming for the label are *Klara and the Sun*, directed by Academy Award® winner Taika Waititi, starring Jenna Ortega and Academy Award® nominee Amy Adams, and based on Nobel Prize winner Kazuo Ishiguro's novel of the same name and *People We Meet on Vacation*, 3000 Pictures and Netflix's feature adaptation of the New York Times bestselling novel by Emily Henry – the first of her novels to go into production – directed by Brett Haley, starring Tom Blyth and Emily Bader. Gabler began her career at International Creative Management before joining Columbia Pictures as a Creative Executive. In 1999, Gabler became President of Fox 2000 Pictures, a division of Twentieth Century Fox which shepherded such films as *The Devil Wears Prada*, *The Hate U Give*, *Hidden Figures*, and *Life of Pi*. Prior to this, Gabler also held the positions of Vice President of Production at United Artists and Senior Vice President at Twentieth Century Fox.

**Jason Reitman** is an Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker who most recently directed *Saturday Night*, a film he co-wrote with Gil Kenan. Reitman made his feature film debut with the 2006 Sundance hit *Thank You For Smoking* for which he won best screenplay at the Independent Spirit Awards. He notably earned Academy Award® nominations for directing *Juno* and *Up in the Air*, the latter of which earned Reitman a WGA Award and BAFTA Award for Best Screenplay. Reitman has collaborated with screenwriter Diablo Cody on four critically acclaimed films, including *Young Adult*, *Tully*, and *Jennifer's Body*. As a producer, Reitman oversaw four seasons of the Golden Globe nominated Hulu comedy series *Casual*. He also produced the Academy Award-winning film *Whiplash* and Jean-Marc Vallee's *Demolition*. In 2010, Reitman co-created the Live Read series with Elvis Mitchell, which ran for five seasons at LACMA where he also sat as an artist-in-residence. In 2020, during the height of the COVID pandemic, Reitman created and directed the Home Movie Princess Bride, raising over a million dollars for World Central Kitchen. In 2021, Reitman directed and co-wrote *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* with Gil Kenan, and in 2023, produced and co-wrote its sequel, *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire*. In early 2024, Reitman assembled 35 prominent film directors in order to save the Westwood Village Theater.