

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2011

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INAUGURAL KAREN SCHMEER FILM EDITING FELLOWSHIP AWARDED TO ERIN CASPER; TO BE PRESENTED AT SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FILM FESTIVAL

AUSTIN, TEXAS – The Karen Schmeer Film Editing Fellowship, founded after the passing of accomplished editor Karen Schmeer (*The Fog of War*, *Sketches of Frank Gehry*), has awarded its inaugural fellowship to Erin Casper. Casper, editor of the documentary feature *Our School*, will receive the award on Tuesday, March 15, 2011 at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Film Festival awards ceremony in Austin, Texas.

The fellowship is a year-long, in-depth experience designed to foster the development of an emerging, talented film editor. The fellowship includes: mentorship with an ACE editor, chosen to match the interests of the fellow; education at the Manhattan Edit Workshop; full festival passes to ACE Edit Fests in Los Angeles and New York; SXSW Festival Film Badge, including full access to films, panels, mentor sessions and more; chrome festival pass to the Independent Film Festival of Boston (IFFB); travel and hotel accommodations to one of the aforementioned festivals; \$500 gift certificate to Powell's Books in Portland (Karen's favorite bookstore); a year-long membership to DocuClub, Arts Engine's monthly screening series of documentary works-in-progress; and a season pass to Stranger Than Fiction, the IFC Center's ongoing documentary film series.

Erin Casper is a rising talent in the documentary editing world. Having worked as an assistant and associate editor on a variety of documentary films including *Youssou Ndour: I Bring What I Love*, Erin recently completed her first feature as lead editor, *Our School*, a verité documentary directed by Mona Nicoara about school segregation of the Roma ('Gypsy') children in Romania. "Erin has been a joyful and formidable collaborator," says Nicoara. "I have learned to fully trust her instincts and to listen very carefully when she stands her ground on issues of emotional structure and stylistic choices. The film fully reflects her quirky sensibility, emotional intelligence, and profound understanding of documentary ethics."

Nearly 100 applications were received for the initial year of the fellowship from a diverse and talented group of editors across the country. Ms. Casper impressed the fellowship committee with her dedication, love of editing, humility, humor, curiosity and remarkable ability to shape a story as demonstrated in *Our School*. The film is premiering at the One World International Human Rights Film Festival in Prague this spring, followed by screenings at the Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival, Visions du Réel, and in competition at the Tribeca Film Festival, where the film will have its North American premiere. Casper was an editing fellow at the Sundance Institute Documentary Edit Lab in 2009 and at the Independent Filmmaker Project Documentary Lab in 2010. She attended the University of Iowa, graduating with honors with a degree in Broadcast Journalism and Art.

"Erin is the ideal recipient of the inaugural fellowship," says Garret Savage, Fellowship Board Member. "She is on the precipice of an exciting and creative documentary editing career, and it's our goal to help her reach that next level." Through the fellowship's year-long program, including notably a mentorship with an ACE editor, Casper will be afforded the chance to deepen her understanding of her craft and broaden her involvement in the documentary community.

"I am deeply honored," says Casper. "The news comes at a very exciting time, having just finished editing my first feature film and preparing for the next steps of 'editorhood.' Although I never met Karen, she inspired me to create a blueprint of how to be an editor, which makes this fellowship a particularly resonant honor for me personally."

KAREN SCHMEER, A.C.E. was one of the leading editors of her generation. Her documentary work with directors including Errol Morris (*Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control*; *Mr. Death*; *The Fog of War*), Sydney Pollack (*Sketches of Frank Gehry*), and Robb Moss (*The Same River Twice*) screened around the world and received accolades including the Academy Award for Best Documentary for *The Fog of War*. She continued to expand her extraordinary talents by foraying into fiction with Neil Abramson's *American Son*, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2008. Other films include *Sergio* (HBO), *My Father the Genius*, *A Brilliant Madness* (American Experience), and *Theme: Murder*. Karen was editing Liz Garbus' *Bobby Fischer Against the World*, a feature documentary about chess genius and recluse Bobby Fischer, when, on the evening of January 29, 2010, she was struck and killed by a speeding car fleeing the scene of a robbery. She was 39 years old.

The Karen Schmeer Film Editing Fellowship was founded in her memory, and is a year-long experience that encourages and champions the talent of an emerging editor. For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation, please visit www.karenschmeer.com



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AMERICAN CINEMA EDITORS (ACE) is an honorary association of professional film editors that celebrates and promotes the art of editing. Editors are included on the basis of professional achievement, dedication to educating others, and commitment to the craft of editing.
www.ace-filmeditors.org

THE SXSW® FILM CONFERENCE AND FESTIVAL is a uniquely creative environment featuring the dynamic convergence of talent, smart audiences and industry heavyweights. A hotbed of discovery and interactivity, the event offers invaluable networking opportunities and immersion into the art and business of the rapidly evolving world of independent film.

The Film Conference buzzes as world-class speakers, creative minds, and notable mentors tackle the latest filmmaking trends amidst the unmatched social atmosphere of the SXSW experience. Simultaneously, the internationally acclaimed, nine-day Festival celebrates raw innovation and emerging talent, featuring a truly diverse program that includes provocative documentaries, subversive comedies, DIY narratives, genre standouts and more.

The annual SXSW Film Awards Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, March 15 at the Vimeo Theater at the Austin Convention Center. The 2011 SXSW Film Festival Awards are hosted by Ovation. For more information, please visit www.ovationtv.com

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