



## **Hollins Alumna and Roanoke Resident's Film to be Showcased at Sundance**

Roanoke, Va. – Stephanie Via, a Hollins University graduate and a Roanoke native, will soon have something in common with such noted film directors as Spike Jonze, Paul Thomas Anderson, Todd Haynes, and David O. Russell.

Via's "True Story" has been selected for the Short Film Program at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival, which will be held January 19-29 in Park City, Utah. The tale of an elderly lady who remembers a tragic childhood moment is one of only 73 short films – dramatic, documentary, and animated - the Festival has chosen to screen this year from over 4,300 submissions. Forty-two films are American and 31 are international representing 17 countries.

"It was a complete surprise," said Via of her selection. "My former film professor at Hollins, Jake Mahaffy, entered 'True Story' on my behalf . The film was my senior thesis."

Jonze (*Adaptation.*), Anderson (*Boogie Nights*), Haynes (*Far from Heaven*), and Russell (*Three Kings*) all presented shorts at Sundance before moving on to feature films.

Via, who attended William Fleming High School, graduated from Hollins in May of this year with a degree in film and photography. She is no stranger to success at prestigious film festivals: Last July, "True Story" won first prize at the Aurora Picture Show's Eighth Anniversary Weekend in Houston, Texas.

At Sundance, a Short Film Jury will award prizes based on outstanding achievement and merit in American and international short filmmaking under 30 minutes in length.

“Short films have always had an important role in cinema and at the Sundance Film Festival,” said John Cooper, Sundance’s director of programming. “[They] are a place to discover some of the most creative and challenging work being done today.”

The Sundance Film Festival is a core program of Sundance Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated year-round to the discovery and development of independent film and theatre artists and audiences. Next year marks the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the Festival and the Institute’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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