

**For immediate release**

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## **Filmmaker Sarah Abbott shortlisted for 2012 Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor's Arts Award**

Regina-based independent filmmaker Sarah Abbott has been short-listed for a 2012 Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor's Arts Award for Arts and Learning. The combination of her filmmaking endeavors, innovative teaching methods, strong work ethic, ability to bridge cultures, commitment to empowering people, and passion for communicating hard-hitting issues have had a far-reaching impact on communities across Saskatchewan.

Abbott, Associate Professor in the Department of Media Production and Studies at the University of Regina, is well-known for two ambitious film projects, *Out In the Cold* (2008) and *This Time Last Winter* (2010). For these productions, she devised a teaching model wherein her students strengthen their technical, creative and life skills in a rigorous professional production environment while working alongside local industry professionals. In *Out In The Cold*, themes of loss, memory and disregard are explored in Cheryl Jack's script that was inspired by the Saskatoon freezing deaths of First Nations men, allegedly at the hands of police. *This Time Last Winter* looks at interracial relationships and the moment of choice we face when the urge to be violent emerges.

Abbott organized important and historic panel discussions that followed the Saskatchewan premiere screenings of both films. The panel discussions, on Aboriginal/police relations and relationship violence, drew the participation of the Saskatoon and Regina police chiefs. Audience numbers ranged from 270-450 and donations were collected for local social health organizations.

"It is amazing to have my work recognised in this prestigious way," Abbott says. "This recognition comes as a result of many people working very hard to make the films with me. It is exciting to use the power of film and community discussion to promote positive change."

Abbott has engaged a number of other social and teaching initiatives, including *Tide Marks*, a feature documentary that examines human rights abuses, oppression and social/political issues in post-apartheid South Africa. The film is accompanied by a study guide she developed. The film *In the Minds of All Beings: Tsogyal Latso of Tibet* raises awareness and funds for a nunnery and sacred site in Tibet.

The Arts and Learning Award recognizes arts educators for excellence and innovation through their demonstrated commitment to arts education, innovative approaches to instruction, involvement in creative partnerships with artists or arts organizations, and/or engaging students in unique and challenging explorations of contemporary ideas through the arts. Award recipients will be announced at a gala celebration of the arts in Saskatoon on September 18, 2012.

"Sarah Abbott is a filmmaker who has made a tremendous impact on individual lives and on an extensive range of communities in Saskatchewan," says Dr. Sheila Petty, Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Regina. "As an educator and artist, she is widely respected for her passion, sensitivity, courage and generosity of spirit. She is an inspiring leader in Saskatchewan."

For more information, please contact Sarah Abbott at 306.585.4437 and visit [www.sarahabbott.ca](http://www.sarahabbott.ca).