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November 2011

**THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY ANNOUNCES  
THE WINNER OF THE 2011 MARGARET MEAD FILMMAKER AWARD**

**DIRECTOR YUANCHEN LIU WINS FOR *TO THE LIGHT***

**AWARD HONORS FILMMAKERS WHO EMBODY THE SPIRIT, ENERGY, AND INNOVATION DEMONSTRATED  
BY PIONEERING ANTHROPOLOGIST MARGARET MEAD**

The 35<sup>th</sup> annual [Margaret Mead Film Festival](#) honored **Yuanchen Liu** with the **Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award** for his film *To the Light* on Sunday, November 13, 2011. Representing the best in documentary, animation, experimental nonfiction, and archival footage, the Mead Festival offers an intimate look at worlds rarely revealed.

"This year's Mead Filmmaker Award nominees pushed the boundaries of visual anthropology as they take audiences deeply into contemporary societal challenges around the world," said Ruth Cohen, senior director of education strategic initiatives at the American Museum of Natural History. "What distinguished *To the Light* was its deeply compelling narrative, and, in a clear link to Margaret Mead's legacy, the compassion and humanity that jumps off the screen."

"Yuanchen Liu's riveting film takes an intimate look at a community struggling to survive in hard economic times," added Ariella Ben-Dov, artistic and festival director of the Margaret Mead Film Festival. "Through his innovative filmmaking, he overcomes the challenges that coincide with filming underground and provides access to what would have otherwise been an untold story."

In *To the Light*, filmmaker Yuanchen Liu takes his camera deep underground and exposes the perils faced by miners, the slim rewards, and dire consequences when things go wrong. The father of two, Luo originally became a coal miner to pay off the fine for violating China's One Child Policy. Young Hui, son of another miner, prefers to be coal-train driver than take work far from home. For many families, coal mining has become a principal source of income and the only alternative to factory jobs in distant cities. But the mines are notoriously dangerous and claim an

estimated 5,000 lives every year. In spite of the risks, the working poor continue to flock to the mines, unable to heed the warning that earning a living wage may also mean dying for it.

The Mead Award jury was led by Academy Award-nominated director **Darren Aronofsky** (*Black Swan, The Wrestler*), who was joined by **Karen Cooper**, director of New York City's Film Forum; **Liz Garbus**, Academy Award-nominated director (*Bobby Fischer Against the World, The Farm: Angola, USA*); and 2002 MacArthur Fellow **Stanley Nelson**, director of the Emmy-winning documentary *The Murder of Emmett Till*.

The 2011 nominees for the Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award were *All for the Good of the World and Nosovice (Vše Pro Dobro Světa a Nošovic)*, directed by Vit Klusak (Czech Republic); *Kinder*, directed by Bettina Büttner (Germany); *Memoirs of a Plague*, directed by Robert Nugent (Australia); *Rainmakers*, directed by Floris-Jan van Luyn (China); *Small Kingdom of Lo*, directed by Caroline Leitner, Daniel Mazza, Giuseppe Tedeschi (Nepal); and *Space Sailors (Fliegerkosmonauten)*, directed by Marian Kiss (Germany, Poland).

The Margaret Mead Filmmaker Award recognizes documentary filmmakers who embody the spirit, energy, and innovation demonstrated by anthropologist Margaret Mead in her research, fieldwork, films, and writings. The award is given to a filmmaker whose feature documentary offers a new perspective on a culture or community while displaying artistic excellence and originality in storytelling. Eligible filmmakers must present a U.S. premiere at the Margaret Mead Film Festival.

Celebrating 35 years as the preeminent showcase for contemporary cultural storytelling, the 2011 Margaret Mead Film Festival screened more than 35 outstanding films culled from more than 1,000 submissions. With films that range from political investigations and observational documentaries to animated and archival works, the Margaret Mead Film Festival strives to illuminate the complexity and diversity of peoples and cultures from around the world.

## **Support**

The Presenting Sponsor of the Museum's multicultural public programming is **MetLife Foundation**.

The Margaret Mead Film Festival is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

The American Museum of Natural History gratefully acknowledges **HBO, Inc.** for its generous support of the Mead Films and cultural programming for New York City Public High Schools.

The 2011 Festival is proudly sponsored by Documentary Channel, Movado, Czech Center, Finland Fits You, the Goethe Institut, and the Consulate General of Switzerland.

*Beyond Planet Earth: The Future of Space Exploration* is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York, ([www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)) in collaboration with the Israel National Museum of Science, Haifa.

*Beyond Planet Earth* is proudly supported by **Con Edison**. Major funding has been provided by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Endowment Fund. Additional support is generously provided by Mary and David Solomon.

### [American Museum of Natural History](#)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses 45 permanent exhibition halls and galleries for temporary exhibitions, the Rose Center for Earth and Space with the Hayden Planetarium, state-of-the-art research laboratories and five active research divisions that support more than 200 scientists in addition to one of the largest natural history libraries in the Western Hemisphere and a permanent collection of more than 32 million specimens and cultural artifacts. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, it is the first American museum to grant the Ph.D. degree. In 2012, the Museum will begin offering a pilot Master of Arts in Teaching with a specialization in earth science. Approximately 5 million visitors from around the world came to the Museum last year and its exhibitions and Space Shows can be seen in venues on five continents. The Museum's website and growing collection of apps for mobile devices extend its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more beyond its walls. Visit [amnh.org](http://amnh.org) for upcoming exhibitions.

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