



HERE

Feature Film Project Summary

A Braden King Film

Written by Braden King and Dani Valent

Producers: Lars Knudsen, Jay Van Hoy

Co-Producer: Jeff Kalousdian

Executive Producers: Zoe Kevork, Julia King

A Truckstop Media / Parts and Labor Production

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Logline

HERE is a dramatic, landscape-obsessed road movie that chronicles a brief but intense romantic relationship between an American satellite-mapping engineer and an expatriate Armenian art photographer who impulsively decide to travel together into uncharted territory.

Synopsis

Will Shepard is an American satellite-mapping engineer contracted to create a new, more accurate survey of the country of Armenia. Within the industry, his solitary work - land-surveying satellite images to check for accuracy and resolve anomalies - is called "ground-truthing". He's been doing it on his own, for years, all over the world. But on this trip, his measurements are not adding up.

Will meets Gadarine Najarian at a rural hotel. Tough and intriguing, she's an expatriate Armenian art photographer on her first trip back in ages, passionately trying to figure out what kind of relationship - if any - she still has with her home country and culture. Fiercely independent, Gadarine is struggling to resolve the life she's led abroad with the Armenian roots that run so deeply through her.

There is an instant, unconscious bond between these two lone travelers; they impulsively decide to continue together. HERE tells the story of their unique journey and the dramatic personal transformations it leads each of them through.

Will and Gadarine move through Armenia and its remarkable landscape photographing, measuring and experiencing the trip in their own individual ways and, ultimately, through each other's eyes. Their journey takes them across the length of the country, from the Lori region in the north to the Iranian border in the south, and finally into the diplomatically undefined Nagorno-Karabagh region. Here they are forced to confront their intensifying relationship and the difficult questions it raises.

Along the way, Will is continually challenged with erroneous data as his trip descends toward failure, while Gadarine encounters much more personal static: nationality, culture, family, old friends. As she starts to discover a new relationship with her homeland, Will begins to question the solitary life he has chosen.

The two become deeply connected as their sense of themselves - and their worlds - expands. As their trip comes to an end, each must deal with the conclusions to which their journey has led them, and each must decide where to go from HERE.



Creative Capital





The Explorer Stories

HERE contains a series of brief interludes: fictional tales of mythical explorers who map the land in fantastic ways. One imagines the land to be a vast sea and designs ships that might sail upon it. Another devises a navigational method using the clouds instead of the stars. A third creates maps that are actual-size. And so on.

These interludes are the story's dreams.

They will be illustrated in collaboration with a number of well-known avant-garde and experimental filmmakers – explorers themselves – who will be sent to a series of extraordinary landscapes around the world to “map” them, using their own idiosyncratic methods.

As these mythical stories are heard in poetic voiceover, cinematic renderings of fantastic landscapes will overtake the screen – some time-lapse, some abstract, others vivid and still.

Through organic visual transitions, the interludes will weave seamlessly in and out of the film, expanding its texture, themes, emotional impact and cinematic vocabulary. With them, HERE follows a tradition of combining compelling drama with creative expressiveness that began with such now-classic independent films as MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO, WINGS OF DESIRE, MY LIFE AS A DOG and BREAKING THE WAVES. They allow HERE a dreamlife as rich and vivid as our own while uniting disparate cinematic traditions, deepening the project's artistic integrity, expanding its audience and intensifying the viewer's experience of its story and themes.

Stills (L – R):

O, Julie Murray; *Hardwood Process*, David Gatten; *I Said Yes*, Phil Solomon; *Greece, to Me*, Barbara Meter
All films were contributions to Boxhead Ensemble's *Stories, Maps and Notes from the Half-Light* tour.



Boxhead Ensemble at the 2001 Dublin Film Festival.

Beyond the Movie: HERE and the Boxhead Ensemble

Several years ago, HERE director Braden King made the film *DUTCH HARBOR: WHERE THE SEA BREAKS ITS BACK* in collaboration with photographer Laura Moya. *DUTCH HARBOR* is a lyrical examination of the life and landscape of a community on the Aleutian Islands, off the west coast of Alaska. The film interweaves residents' personal narratives about living at one of the edges of the Earth with imagery of Dutch Harbor's landscape, its community and crab fishing boats on the Bering Sea.

In addition to more traditional festival screenings and distribution, *DUTCH HARBOR* toured in the United States and Europe with live, improvised soundtrack accompaniment by the Boxhead Ensemble - a rotating group of musicians formed to create the film's soundtrack under the guidance of composer Michael Krassner.

King has continued to work with the Ensemble since *DUTCH HARBOR*, producing live music and film events that have featured work by filmmakers Jem Cohen, Gustav Deutsch, Gerard Holthius, Peter Hutton, Barbara Meter, Julie Murray, Chris Petit, Phil Solomon, Guy Sherwin, Anita Thacher and Naomi Uman, among others. The Boxhead Ensemble's rotating lineup has included Guillermo Gregorio, David Grubbs, Glenn Kotche (Wilco), Fred Lonberg-Holm, Will Oldham, Jim O'Rourke (Sonic Youth), Jeff Parker (Tortoise), Tim Rutili (Califone), Jeff Tweedy, Scott Tuma, Ken Vandermark, Jim White (Dirty Three, Cat Power) and many more.

King, Krassner and the Ensemble will continue their collaboration with *HERE* – but with an even greater sense of ambition and intention. Non-traditional venues for the recording of the film's soundtrack are under consideration: James Turrell's *Rodin Crater*, for example, and several ancient monasteries throughout Armenia. In addition, international tours and events featuring film screenings with live musical accompaniment are being planned to coincide with premieres and to support *HERE*'s DVD release.

Conceptually, these tours and events will turn *HERE* inside out, featuring longer “director's cuts” of the Explorer Story interludes, seamlessly connected with landscape footage taken from *HERE*'s dramatic story. Separate from the film's primary theatrical release, these events will be a visceral exploration of the “dream life” of *HERE*. They will expand its thematic scope and audience – greatly extending its life, press profile and revenue potential.

The entire project – the film, the Explorer Stories, the Boxhead Ensemble tours – is designed to become a kind of macro Map or Explorer Story of its own, functioning on several formal, narrative and conceptual levels at once, while transcending all manner of media and audience borderlines.

Awards and Honors

Cannes Film Festival Atelier (2008)

HERE was one of fifteen projects (and one of only two U.S. projects) selected from around the world for the 2008 Cannes Film Festival Atelier.

Sundance / NHK International Filmmakers Award (2008)

At the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, the HERE screenplay and Director Braden King were named the U.S. winners of the Sundance / NHK International Filmmakers Award.

Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art (2008)

Braden King's Armenian research and location scout photographs were included in the recent exhibition "Mapping the Self" at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art.

Rockefeller / Renew Media / Tribeca Film Institute Fellowship (2008)

Braden King was awarded a 2008 Rockefeller / Renew Media Fellowship for HERE.

Sundance Institute: January and June Screenwriters Labs (2007)*

HERE was one of twelve projects selected for the January and June 2007 Sundance Institute Screenwriters Labs.

Sundance Institute: June Directors Lab (2007)*

HERE was one of eight projects selected for the June 2007 Sundance Institute Directors Lab.

Annenberg Feature Film Fellowship (2007)

Braden King was awarded an Annenberg Feature Film Fellowship for HERE.

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellowship (2007)

Braden King was the 2007 Alfred P. Sloan Fellow for HERE.

Rotterdam Film Festival Cinemart Producer's Lab (2007)

Producer Julia King was one of two U.S. producers selected for the Rotterdam Film Festival's 2007 CineMart Producer's Lab for HERE.

IFP / No Borders (2005)

HERE was selected for the prestigious No Borders section of the 2005 IFP Market.

Creative Capital Foundation (2005)

Braden King received a 2005 Creative Capital Grant to develop HERE.

Current Status

HERE is in the final stages of development and financing. The film will be shot entirely on location in Armenia. Principal photography is set to begin in late spring, 2009.

HERE is being produced by Lars Knudsen and Jay Van Hoy. Associate Producer Jeff Kalousdian and Director Braden King have made numerous research and scouting trips to Armenia, traveling extensively throughout the country and immersing themselves in its film and creative communities. The production is now finalizing cast and crew.

**Just six projects were invited to the 2007 Sundance Screenwriters Labs and the '07 Sundance Directors Lab.*



Presenting Partner: Pomegranate Arts

Founded in 1998 by Linda Brumbach, **Pomegranate Arts** is an independent production company dedicated to the development of international contemporary performing arts projects. Since its inception, Pomegranate Arts has conceived, produced, or represented projects by Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, London's Improbable, Sankai Juku, Dan Zanes, and Goran Bregovic. Special projects include *Dracula: The Music And Film* with Philip Glass and the Kronos Quartet; the music theater work *Shockheaded Peter*; Brazilian vocalist Virginia Rodrigues; Drama Desk Award winning *Charlie Victor Romeo*; *Healing The Divide, A Concert for Peace and Reconciliation*, presented by Philip Glass and Richard Gere; and Hal Willner's *Came So Far For Beauty, An Evening Of Leonard Cohen Songs*. Upcoming projects include the first North American tour of Goran Bregovic, Laurie Anderson's *Two-Sided Plays*, the remounting of Lucinda Childs' 1979 classic *Dance* and the international art and performance-based extensions of HERE.

The Production Team

Co-Writer / Director



Braden King co-directed the film *DUTCH HARBOR: WHERE THE SEA BREAKS ITS BACK*. Made in collaboration with photographer Laura Moya, *DUTCH HARBOR* is a lyric, non-fiction meditation on the life and landscape of an Aleutian Island community off the west coast of Alaska. *DUTCH HARBOR* has screened in over 20 international film festivals and the film toured internationally with live, improvised soundtrack accompaniment by the critically-acclaimed Boxhead Ensemble, under the direction of composer Michael Krassner. The film was released theatrically in Europe by ED Distribution; Plexifilm will distribute a new, deluxe DVD edition worldwide in 2009.

King is represented for commercial work by New York-based Washington Square Films. Commercial clients include American Airlines, ESPN, Johnson and Johnson, Miller Beer, Nikon, The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, Siemens and UNICEF. He has directed music videos and short films for Sonic Youth, Chan Marshall, Will Oldham, Tortoise, Low, Yo La Tengo and Sparklehorse. King also directed the groundbreaking interactive DVD project *LOOKING FOR A THRILL*, which features over five hours of expressively rendered interviews with over 112 musicians and artists.

Recent non-narrative work includes *HEAVEN IS A PLACE / NOTHING EVER HAPPENS* (2007), a film and video installation commissioned by Chris Doyle for the 50,000 BEDS exhibition at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum and *THE STORY IS STILL ASLEEP*, a dynamic, multi-channel video piece with live musical accompaniment that premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival. His Armenian HERE location scout photographs were included in the Spring, 2008 exhibition *MAPPING THE SELF* at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art.

King's work has been screened on all major U.S. broadcast networks and HBO, the BBC, Sundance Channel, MTV, Channel 4 (UK) and others. He has guest-lectured at Yale University, The University of Southern California, Bard College, Wheaton College and the Graduate School at the City University of New York. King studied film at the USC School of Cinema-Television in Los Angeles, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 1993.

He lives in New York City with his wife, Mimi, and his two sons, Jonas and Oliver.

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Co-Writer



Australian writer **Dani Valent** spent eight years traveling the world for guidebook publisher Lonely Planet, researching and writing about various places, including Bulgaria, Bonaire, Hong Kong, New York, India and Turkey. Her book *World Food Turkey* was short-listed for the Andre Simon Memorial Fund Book Award in 2000, and she was a consultant for Lonely Planet Television's SIX DEGREES series.

Valent has threaded fiction and poetry-writing through her career; her short stories and poems have appeared in numerous Australian literary magazines. She published a book of poetry and short fiction, *Dani Valent: Works*, in 1990.

Dani currently lives in Melbourne, Australia, where she works as a freelance journalist, contributing regularly to *Good Weekend*, Australia's premier newspaper magazine and *The Age*, Melbourne's daily newspaper.

Lead Actor



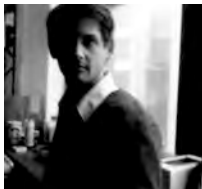
After seeing **Lubna Azabal** (Gadarine Najarian) in the film PARADISE NOW, director Braden King invited her to work with him for three weeks at the 2007 Sundance Directors Lab. It was immediately evident that there was no more perfect actor for the role of Gadarine.

Based in Brussels and Paris, Azabal has appeared in over fifteen feature films, including Ridley Scott's BODY OF LIES, André Techine's FAR and CHANGING TIMES, Tony Gatlif's EXILS*, Hany Abu-Assad's Academy Award Nominated PARADISE NOW and Robert Kechichian's ARAM. In 2007, Azabal won the Jerusalem Film Festival's Most Promising

Actress award for her performance in Guy Nattiv's STRANGERS. She is a graduate of the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles.

*Winner, Best Director, 2004 Cannes Film Festival; Nominated for the Palme D'Or.

Composer



Michael Krassner began composing music for film with the **Boxhead Ensemble**, a group he first formed in the early '90s to score a number of short films by filmmakers Braden King and Larry Stuckey. The Ensemble went on to record the soundtrack to King's film DUTCH HARBOR: WHERE THE SEA BREAKS ITS BACK at Truckstop Audio Recording Co. (Chicago), where he was a founding partner along with King and musician / recording engineer Joseph Ferguson.

Subsequent Boxhead Ensemble recordings include two live albums from the DUTCH HARBOR film screening tours (*The Last Place to Go* and *Niagara Falls*), a soundtrack for the John Hyams HBO documentary THE SMASHING MACHINE and the studio albums *Two Brothers*, *Quartets* and *Nocturnes*.

Over the years, the Boxhead Ensemble's rotating lineup has included Ken Vandermark, Jim O'Rourke (Sonic Youth, Gastr del Sol), Will Oldham (Palace Music, Bonnie 'Prince' Billy), Glenn Kotche (Wilco), Doug Mccombs (Tortoise), Tim Rutili (Califone), Fred Lonberg-Holm, Scott Tuma, Jim White (Dirty Three, Cat Power) and others.

Producers



Established in 2004, **Lars Knudsen** and **Jay Van Hoy**'s production company **Parts and Labor** is dedicated to director-driven, collaborative filmmaking. Integral to the company's consistency is an unwavering dedication to each project, a true respect for the process and a love of film.

In October 2008, Parts and Labor signed a First-Look / Development deal with producer Scott Rudin (Miramax / Disney). At the 2008 Toronto Film Festival, *Variety* singled out Knudsen and Van Hoy in their list of "10 Producers to Watch". In 2006, the two were included in *Filmmaker Magazine*'s "25 New Faces of Independent Film" and *Paste Magazine*'s Top 10 list of "Arthouse Powerhouse Producers."

Knudsen and Van Hoy produced Kelly Reichardt's acclaimed feature *OLD JOY*, Cam Archer's *WILD TIGERS I HAVE KNOWN*, Steve Collins' *GRETCHEN* and Spencer Parsons' *I'LL COME RUNNING*. Two recent projects, Nik Fackler's *LOVELY, STILL* and So Yong Kim's *TREELESS MOUNTAIN*, premiered at the 2008 Toronto Film Festival. Both will be released theatrically in 2009.

Upcoming films include Cruz Angeles' *DON'T LET ME DROWN*, which will premiere in Competition at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival. Currently in post: David Barker's *UNTITLED*, Cam Archer's *SHIT YEAR* and Bradley Rust Gray's *EXPLODING GIRL*. In development are new films by Cam Archer, So Yong Kim, Nik Fackler, Spencer Parsons, and Bradley Rust Gray and debuts by Steve Doughton (*SPRUNG*), Andrew Dosunmu (*MOTHER OF GEORGE*), Matt Ross (*FRANK & LOLA*) and James Clauer (*WAYWARD HO!*). Now nearing production are new features by Julia Loktev (*THE LONELIEST PLANET*), Aaron Katz (*COLD WEATHER*), Mike Mills (*UNTITLED*), and Braden King (*HERE*).



Originally from Lake Tahoe, California, Co-Producer **Jeff Kalousdian** has lived and worked in Armenia since 1992. He brings 15 years of Armenian operational know-how and extensive cultural and social insight to *HERE*.

Kalousdian's work has drawn him to some of the world's most volatile and challenging areas, including Kosovo, Abkhazia and Nagorno Karabagh.

Specializing in economic development and international relations, Kalousdian has managed post-conflict recovery and economic development projects in Armenia, Georgia, Serbia and Macedonia. Sponsors behind these programs include the United Nations, European Union and the U.S. Government.

In Armenia and Karabagh, Kalousdian has managed multi-million dollar development programs and advised the United Nations, Red Cross, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Save the Children, Open Society Institute, Danish International Development Agency and the Armenian Government. In 2006, Kalousdian helped pioneer the Directors Across Borders program at Yerevan's Golden Apricot Film Festival. DAB works to build regional peace and tolerance by supporting cross-border film production.

Kalousdian currently divides his time between the U.S. and Armenia.



Executive producer **Julia King** is a New York-based independent film producer who works in documentary and feature films. She co-produced *AMERICAN SPLENDOR*, directed by Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini and produced by Ted Hope in association with HBO Films. *AMERICAN SPLENDOR* won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival, the FIRPRISI International Critics Prize at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay.

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King also produced the feature length documentary THE YOUNG AND THE DEAD, a portrait of a Los Angeles cemetery and its youthful owner that premiered at the Venice Film Festival, screened at the Telluride Film Festival and aired on HBO in 2000, and HELLO HE LIED, AND OTHER TRUTHS FROM THE HOLLYWOOD TRENCHES, a lighthearted, yet in-depth look at producers working in Hollywood that aired on American Movie Classics in 2001.

Most recently, King produced WANDERLUST, a feature-length documentary about road movies for the Independent Film Channel and THE CARETAKERS, a 20-minute narrative film directed by Elisabeth Subrin and Executive Produced by Scott Macaulay. THE CARETAKERS premiered at the 2006 New York Film Festival.



Four years after moving to Los Angeles, Executive Producer **Zoe Kevork** has already worked in various capacities for Kevin Spacey's Triggerstreet Productions, Val Kilmer, Fred Roos, Faye Dunaway and Francis Ford Coppola.

As an attorney, Kevork has split her career between Toronto and Los Angeles, having practiced as an international trade attorney for the Ontario government and, more recently, focusing on entertainment law.

She has been invited to present at the ACSUS conference on the North American monetary union, has been to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), has coached at Notre Dame University Law School and she also judged the Jessup International Law Moot Competition.

Besides maintaining her legal practice, Zoe is on the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) and is a concert producer / promoter as the founder of Infinite Echo Entertainment.