



## **DATUNA: PORTRAIT OF AMERICA wins at the 23rd Annual Raindance Film Festival**



*Still from 'Datuna: Portrait of America', wins Feature Film of the Festival at the 23rd annual Raindance Film Festival*

**'DATUNA: PORTRAIT OF AMERICA'** was named **Feature Film of the Festival** at the **23rd annual Raindance Film Festival**, a documentary about the life of the artist **David Datuna** known for his distinctive work celebrating themes of national identity and freedom. The festival, which closed on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October, hosted over 90 feature length films, 200 shorts and 30 industry events from more 48 countries with over 6,800 films submitted. The winning films were selected from a shortlist by the 2015 Raindance Jury, a panel of influential figures from the media world including **Col Needham**, Founder and CEO of IMDb, actress **Sheridan Smith** and actor **Martin Freeman**.

*"It was an honour to part of the Raindance Film Festival, and for the film to receive such an esteemed award."* stated Datuna.

**'Datuna: Portrait of America'**, **Directed by Brian Bayerl**, follows the compelling journey of artist David Datuna as he pursues a dream of cultural and artistic freedom in his adopted country, the United States. An émigré from Soviet Georgia, the film traces his steps from a boyhood dream of being an artist to sharing his art with tens of thousands at the **Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery**, one the most respected institutions in the world. As Datuna becomes the first artist globally to incorporate the

use of early wearable technology devices like [Google Glass](#) in a contemporary work of art, his personal life takes a dramatic turn driven by real-life events when the 40 year old artist discovers he has stage 3 lung cancer.

The powerful, emotional interplay of artistic triumph and personal trial form a dramatic counterpoint to the arc of Datuna's own story as an immigrant seeking freedom, and his unbridled enthusiasm for Western culture. Datuna's future-leaning ideas embrace cutting-edge technology as a bridge to communicate through his art with an ever-changing 21st Century audience. This remarkable story chronicles one man's quest to achieve his dreams against seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and to never give up.

[Amy Henderson](#), the **Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery's** historian emerita said, "*As a work of art, Portrait of America marks a dynamic contemporary moment in the intersection of culture and technology.*"

Acclaimed **Director Brian Bayerl**, **Producer Michael Huter** and **Composer Ljova Zhrurbin** come together to tell this extraordinary story. The film balances multiple story lines of an aspiring immigrant escaping oppression, the triumphant journey of a rising artist, new technologies, and real life crisis. [DATUNA: PORTRAIT OF AMERICA](#) is the first feature length film in the world to incorporate the use of Google Glass in a variety of ways, as controversial public uses of wearable devices emerge with greater utility in the film, art, medical and business communities.

London's [Raindance Film Festival](#) 2015 was the European Premiere of Datuna: Portrait of America. Now in its 23rd year, the festival has a strong legacy of showing alternative films and uncovering the hottest new filmmakers to hit the cinematic scene. Listed by Variety as one of the world's top 50 'unmissable film festivals', Raindance aims to nurture, support and promote independent films and filmmakers from the UK and around the world. Raindance-premiered hits include Memento, Old Boy, the Blair Witch Project, Pusher, Ghost World and Love Exposure.

### **The full list of winners:**

**Best International Feature: Alice In Marialand**

**Best British Feature: Kicking Off**

**Best Debut Feature: Princess**

**Best Documentary Feature: Gored**

**Feature Film of the Festival: Datuna: Portrait of America**

**Best International Short: Home**

**Best UK Short: North**

**Best Animated Short: Palm Rot**

**Best Documentary Short: Walking Through Havana**

**Short Film of the Festival: Winter Light**

**Special Jury Prize for a Short: The House Job**

**Best Music Video: Stealing Sheep - Not Real**

Film Website: [datunamovie.com](http://datunamovie.com)

Film Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/124889484>

Festival: <http://raindancefestival.org/>

Press Materials: <http://datunamovie.com/press.php>

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About Raindance Film Festival**

Now in its 23rd year, Raindance Film Festival is Europe's leading independent Film Festival showcasing feature films, shorts and docs from around the world and specialising in independent films and directorial debuts. The festival has a strong legacy of showing alternative, edgy films. Since 1993 Raindance Film Festival has uncovered the hottest new filmmakers to hit the cinematic scene.

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#### **Raindance – The Voice of Independent Film**

Raindance is dedicated to fostering and promoting independent film in the UK and around the world. Based in the heart of London, Raindance combines [Raindance Film Festival](#), [Training Courses](#), the prestigious [British Independent Film Awards](#).