Ava DuVernay made her directorial debut with the critically-acclaimed 2008 hip hop documentary, *This is The Life*. Winner of Audience Awards in Toronto, Los Angeles and Seattle, the film was released theatrically and debuted on Showtime in April 2009. "It’s rare that being schooled so deeply is so pleasurable." (LA Weekly).

Her 2010 *My Mic Sounds Nice*, a definitive history of female hip hop artists, was BET Networks’ first original music documentary.

In 2010, she wrote, produced and directed the feature, *I Will Follow*, starring Salli Richardson-Whitfield, Omari Hardwick and Beverly Todd. Released theatrically in 2011, the family drama was hailed by critic Roger Ebert as "one of the best films I’ve seen about the loss of a loved one." "Its elegantly simple structure filled in with startling, understated force..." (Village Voice).

In 2012 she won the Best Director Prize at the Sundance Film Festival for her second feature film *Middle of Nowhere*, which chronicles one woman’s struggle to maintain her life when her husband is sentenced to prison. “Classic filmmaking of a completely different sort” (LA Times).

DuVernay also worked for more than 14 years in the marketing and publicity end of filmmaking. In 1999 DuVernay founded the award winning DVA Media + Marketing Firm which has provided marketing and publicity strategy and execution for more than 120 films and television programs. The January 2011 New York Times featured AaFFRM, the African American Film Festival Releasing Movement, an innovative marketing strategy developed by DuVernay to empower black independent filmmakers through wider theatrical distribution of their work.


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The Women’s Studies Department in conjunction with the Departments of African American Studies and History

is pleased to present

2012 SUNDANCE BEST DIRECTOR
MS. AVA DUVERNAY

Her Sundance film *Middle of Nowhere* premieres in D.C. on October 12. Join us on September 20 as Ms. DuVernay shows clips from and discusses this and two of her other films. She will also talk about her innovative marketing and film distribution strategies.

**September 20, 2012**  
Nyumburu Cultural Center, Multipurpose Room, UMD  
4:00-5:30 p.m.