

Nomination of the "Sita Sings the Blues" Distribution Project for the FutureEverything 2010 Art Award

- **Name of nominee:** Nina Paley <nina@ninapaley.com>
- **Title of project:** "Sita Sings the Blues" Distribution Project (SDP)
- **Date:** April 2009 - present
- **Media:** Film/Video
- **Dimensions or duration (as appropriate):** 82 minutes (see below)
- **Location:** everywhere (Internet, theaters, etc)

- **Project outline:**

The "Sita Sings the Blues" Distribution Project is a transparent, public demonstration of how to flourish with an open source economic model, aimed at independent artists. It is based on the distribution of the popular and award-winning film *Sita Sings the Blues* by Nina Paley.

After painful negotiations over music licensing, Paley knew she wanted a monopoly-free distribution model, and released the film under a Creative Commons ShareAlike license in early 2009.

Then she went a step further: working with the non-profit QuestionCopyright.org (where she is Artist-in-Residence), she developed a business model consciously based on the free software / open source movement. While encouraging people to share the film freely, she sells endorsed DVDs from an online store; offers convenient donation methods; helps fans get involved (for example, the DVD subtitling was done by volunteers); allows commercial use (such as screenings) without requiring permission first; uses non-exclusive, endorsement-based contracts with distributors to get the film into theaters; and encourages remixes and creative re-use.

Both the film and the model are succeeding very well. The core of the project is that Paley actively evangelizes her strategy -- giving concrete numbers, so people see how the model is working -- to other artists wherever she can, online, in print, in interviews, and at conferences. I believe this is an increasingly important message for independent artists and audiences, and that her effort to deliver it deserves serious consideration for the FutureEverything 2010 Art Award.

- **Short biography:**

Nina Paley was born in 1968 in Champaign, IL, USA. She is a longtime veteran of syndicated comic strips, creating "Fluff" (Universal Press Syndicate), "The Hots" (King Features), and her own alternative weekly "Nina's Adventures." In 1998 she began making independent animated festival films, including the controversial but popular environmental short "The Stork." In 2002 she followed her then-husband to Trivandrum, India, where she read her first Ramayana. This inspired her first feature-length film, "Sita Sings the Blues", which she animated and produced single-handedly over the course of 5 years on a home computer. Nina teaches at Parsons School of Design in Manhattan, is a 2006 Guggenheim Fellow, and is Artist in Residence at QuestionCopyright.org.

- **URL:** <http://sitasingstheblues.com> , http://questioncopyright.org/sita_distribution

- **Supporting material:**

The film itself, and presentations and other supporting material related to the project, may be obtained from the URLs given above.