

NYWIFT || New York Women in Film & Television

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NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION ANNOUNCES

THE RAVENAL FOUNDATION FEATURE FILM GRANT AWARDEE

Grant awarded to Diane Paragas for *Yellow Rose*

NEW YORK, NY – April 30, 2018 – New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) is pleased to announce the presentation of a \$7,500 grant funded by the Alan M. & Mildred S. Ravenal Foundation. The NYWIFT Ravenal Foundation Grant supports the production of a dramatic feature film from a female second-time feature film director over 40 years of age. Grant funds may be used for pre-production, production, or post-production.

This year's grant has been awarded to Diana Paragas for *Yellow Rose*. Paragas also co-wrote the script with Annie Howell. The film, which has a mostly female crew, follows Rose Garcia, an undocumented teenager living in Texas, who dreams one day of being a country music star despite the ridicule of everyone around her. When she finds out that her mother is about to be deported, she is heartbroken, but determined to follow her dreams, befriending an almost-famous country star who helps her write a demo.

"It's such an honor to be the recipient of the 2018 NYWIFT Ravenal Grant," Paragas said. "I've been trying to get this film made for the better part of 15 years. I stuck with it because I truly believe this story of an undocumented dreamer who longs to be a country singer was unique and needed to be told. I think it took so long simply because until now, there was no confidence that stories of 'the other' would have a market and being a female Asian-American director didn't help either. But times have definitely changed. Through grants like this I think we finally are beginning to tip the scale in the right direction."

Paragas is an award-winning documentary film director and commercial director. Her films have appeared on Showtime, BET, Discovery, MTV, Bravo and PBS. Paragas started her career in advertising then went on to work at MTV and for Discovery Asia. Paragas is also the founder and owner of NYC based Civilian Studios. She has directed award-winning commercials for Fortune 500 companies and is repped by the prestigious Rascal Films. In 2012, she produced and directed the feature documentary *Brooklyn Boheme*, which premiered in February on Showtime networks. The documentary, which was co-directed and co-produced with Nelson George, celebrates the post-Civil Rights artistic movement of Fort Greene Brooklyn and features Spike Lee, Chris Rock, Rosie Perez and Saul Williams, among others.

Yellow Rose was chosen from a wide range of applications submitted by women filmmakers from around the country.

This is the fourth year the grant is being presented. Last year it was presented to Debra Kirschner for *Mallwalkers*. Other previous awardees are Rachel Feldman for *Fair Fight*, which is being produced by Jenette Kahn and Adam Richman of Double Nickel Entertainment, and Janet Grillo for *Jack of the Red Hearts*, which went on to premiered at the inaugural Bentonville Film Festival in 2015.

Filmmaker Cornelia Ravenal, who initiated the grant, states, “Barriers in the entertainment industry, especially for women directors, are finally being exposed. But for women over 40, there’s an additional barrier: ageism. We hope this grant begins to address that inequity and encourages all women directors to forge ahead.”

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About New York Women in Film & Television:

New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) advocates for equality in the moving image industry and supports women in every stage of their careers. As the preeminent entertainment industry association for women in New York, NYWIFT energizes women by illuminating their achievements, presenting training and professional development programs, awarding scholarships and grants, and providing access to a supportive community of peers. NYWIFT brings together nearly 2,500 women and men working both above and below the line. NYWIFT is part of a network of 50 women in film chapters worldwide, representing more than 15,000 members. NYWIFT is a nonprofit 501c3 public charity.

More information can be found online at: www.NYWIFT.org

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