



New York Women in Film & Television and IRIS announce:

## **The Writers Lab for Women Screenwriters over 40 Selects 2017 Participants**

**12 Women Screenwriters Invited to Four-Day Intensive Script Development  
Retreat Beginning September 14**

**New York City (August 2, 2017)** – New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) and IRIS are pleased to announce the screenwriters selected to participate in the third year of The Writers Lab. The program is the only lab in the world devoted to providing script development for women writers over the age of 40. It is produced by NYWIFT and IRIS, in collaboration with The Writers Guild of America, East, and is funded by **Meryl Streep** and **Oprah Winfrey**.

The 12 projects selected for The Writers Lab 2017 are:

- ***The Breakline***, Kim and Mai Spurlock
- ***Bring Back Girl***, Vigil Chime
- ***The Contest***, Judith and Sandra Berg
- ***The Custom of the Sea***, Karen McDermott
- ***The Deal***, Andi Delott
- ***Grandview***, Pamela Harris
- ***...into the Land of Nod***, Kat Smith
- ***Late Bloomer***, Mandy Fabian
- ***Mile Zero***, Holly Brix
- ***Taka-Jo***, Samantha Manahan and Carol Hostutler
- ***Warrior Girl***, Laurie Whitaker
- ***Yazoo Cryin'***, Shawn Tolleson

The mentors confirmed for the Lab, slated for September 14-17, 2017, include: **Susan Cartsonis** (*What Women Want, Where the Heart Is*), **Lisa Cortés** (*Precious, Shadowboxer*), **Amy Fox** (*Equity*), **Caroline Kaplan** (*Time Out of Mind, Letters to Juliet*), and **Pat Verducci** (Consultant, Disney/Pixar). **Alexis Alexanian** (*Pieces of April*) will head a high-powered roster of special guests.

“The Writers Lab has proven an invaluable vehicle in championing the underserved and underrepresented,” NYWIFT Executive Director Terry Lawler said. “We are thrilled to give these 12 promising writers an opportunity to benefit from the wisdom and guidance of our highly accomplished mentors.”

“In three years, we’ve seen that the number and quality of screenplays written by women is staggering,” said IRIS Co-Founder Nitza Wilon. “Every script that we can develop brings us closer to balancing the scales in the film world: More women writing = more roles for women, more opportunities for women to helm those films, and more movies that *everyone* wants to see.”

The Writers Lab will take place in the Connecticut River Valley. The mentors and 12 writers will meet for intensive one-on-one discussions to develop and refine their scripts. In addition, everyone will come together for panel discussions to explore universal themes and concepts.

**The Writers Lab** was launched in 2015 to provide script development for women writers over the age of 40. The Lab brings promising scripts from female screenwriters together with outstanding professional filmmakers for an intensive writing retreat. Internationally recognized for its bold mandate, The Writers Lab looks to expand the range of stories in narrative fictional film.

For more information, please visit [www.thewriterslab.nyc](http://www.thewriterslab.nyc).

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### **About IRIS**

IRIS champions the female voice in fictional narrative film. Founded by Elizabeth Kaiden, Kyle Ann Stokes, and Nitza Wilon, IRIS co-produces The Writers Lab for female storytellers, targeting the development stage of filmmaking to address gender imbalance in stories being told. IRIS also runs the Screenwriting Lab for Emerging Women Writers at the Athena Film Festival, and is committed to supporting, promoting, and expanding opportunities for screenplays by women.

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### **About New York Women in Film & Television:**

The preeminent entertainment industry association for women in New York City, NYWIFT supports women calling the shots in film, television and digital media. NYWIFT energizes the careers of women in entertainment by illuminating their achievements, providing training and professional development activities, and advocating for equality. Membership includes more than 2,100 women and men working in all areas of the industry. NYWIFT is part of a network of 40 women in film organizations worldwide, representing more than 10,000 members.

For further information about New York Women in Film & Television, please visit [www.nywift.org](http://www.nywift.org). Follow @NYWIFT on all social media for additional event updates, news and photos.

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