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For Immediate Release:

IRIS and New York Women in Film & Television announce:

NICOLE KIDMAN JOINS MERYL STREEP IN SUPPORTING THE WRITERS LAB

**The Writers Lab Provides Mentorship and Script Development for Women Screenwriters
Over 40**

New York City (February 1, 2018) – New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) and IRIS are pleased to announce that Academy Award, Emmy Award and Golden Globe Award winning actor **Nicole Kidman** has joined **Meryl Streep** in supporting The Writers Lab. The project, established for women screenwriters over the age of 40 by NYWIFT and IRIS, in collaboration with the Writers Guild of America, East, selects leading filmmakers to provide exclusive mentorship and increase opportunities for content made by women. The program has received funding from Streep every year since its inception in 2015. Kidman joins the likes of past supporter Oprah Winfrey, who matched Streep’s donation.

“What wonderful idea,” said Kidman of The Writers Lab. “A space for women to work with one another to develop the stories they want to tell. I’m a fan already.”

During Kidman’s acceptance speech at the Screen Actors Guild Awards for her performance in HBO’s *Big Little Lies*, she noted how opportunities for women are expanding: “How wonderful...that our careers today can go beyond 40 years old, because 20 years ago we were pretty washed up by this stage in our lives. That’s not the case now. We’ve proven...that we are potent and powerful and viable,” said Kidman. “I just beg that the industry stays behind us, because our stories are finally being told. It’s only the beginning and I’m so proud to be part of a community that is instigating this change, but I applaud the writers, directors, studios and financiers to put passion and money behind our stories. We have proven that we can do this. We can continue to do this but only with support of this industry and that money and passion.”

“We are beyond thrilled to have Nicole Kidman join Meryl Streep in supporting The Writers Lab,” said Terry Lawler, Executive Director of New York Women in Film & Television. “She is truly a champion of women storytellers, and has particularly been an outspoken advocate for women over 40. At this critical moment for women in the industry, it is heartening to see powerhouses

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like Meryl and Nicole take decisive action to combat both ageism and sexism by helping to provide a platform for these voices to be heard. It is an honor to have her support.”

“This is how change happens,” said Nitza Wilon of IRIS. “When extraordinary women – and Nicole Kidman is clearly an exceptional activist as well as an exceptional actor – use their power, they can shift the entire culture. We are euphoric that such superlative women support our work.”

The Writers Lab 2018 will take place Tuesday, September 25 - Saturday, September 29, 2018, and will include a select group of female screenwriters for a four-day intensive script development retreat with acclaimed mentors. Mentors already attached to **The Writers Lab 2018** include: **Pamela Gray**, **Mary Jane Skalski**, and **Pat Verducci**.

The selected screenwriters will be announced August 1. Submissions must be feature-length, fictional narrative scripts of any genre written in English by women over the age of 40. The Lab announced earlier this year that it has expanded its scope to include international submissions.

Applications for the 2018 Lab are available now through February 28, 2018. For more information and to submit, please visit thewriterslab.nyc.

The Writers Lab was launched in 2015 to provide script development for women writers over the age of 40. It creates a springboard for scripts to reach the next stage of production and expands the diversity of narrative film.

Impact of the Lab to-date:

- **Five** writers have their first writer-for-hire jobs
- **Three** writers have their first manager and agent
- **One** writer won a teaching job at a university
- **One** of our inaugural scripts has been optioned by a production/financing company with a director attached
- **One** inaugural script has been optioned by an Oscar-nominated director
- **One** writer was awarded the prestigious Nicholl Fellowship for screenwriting

The Writers Lab is funded by **Meryl Streep** for the fourth year, and produced by **IRIS** and **New York Women in Film & Television** in collaboration with the **Writers Guild of America, East**, with support from **The Black List**, **Relativity Media**, **Stony Brook Southampton+Manhattan**, and **Tribeca Film Institute**.

Past Writers Lab mentors include Jessica Bendinger (*Bring It On*, *Aquamarine*), Susan Cartsonis (*Carrie Pilby*, *The Duff*), Rachel Cohen (*Stranger Weather*, *House of Z*), Lisa Cortes (*Precious*), Amy Fox (*Equity*), Pamela Gray (*A Walk on the Moon*, *Music of the Heart*), Caroline Kaplan (*Time Out of Mind*, *Personal Velocity*), Meg LeFauve (*Inside Out*, *The Dangerous Lives*

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of *Altar Boys*), Darnell Martin (*Cadillac Records, I Like It Like That*), Gina Prince-Bythewood (*Secret Life of Bees, Beyond the Lights*), Mary Jane Skalski (*Win Win, The Station Agent*), Kirsten Smith (*Legally Blonde, Ten Things I Hate About You*), Guinevere Turner (*American Psycho, The Notorious Bettie Page*), Pat Verducci (Disney/Pixar), Liglia Villalobos (*Under the Same Moon, Firelight*).

About IRIS

IRIS was founded in New York City in 2013 by Nitza Wilon, Kyle Ann Stokes, and Elizabeth Kaiden to champion the female voice in fictional narrative film. A co-founder of The Writers Lab for women over 40, and partner in the Athena IRIS Lab for emerging women writers, IRIS supports and promotes women writers and filmmakers.

For more information, please visit: thewriterslab.nyc/about/iris/

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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