

NYWIFT || New York Women in Film & Television

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NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION ANNOUNCES

THE RAVENAL FOUNDATION FEATURE FILM GRANT AWARDEES LYDIA DEAN PILCHER AND SUZANNE GUACCI

NEW YORK, NY – Tuesday, March 26, 2019 – New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) is pleased to announce the presentation of two grants 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 first-place \$7,500 grant has been awarded to Lydia Dean Pilcher's *Liberté – A Call to Spy*, which is currently in post-production. The film is based on the true story of three civilian women in Winston Churchill's "secret army" who formed an unlikely sisterhood while entangled in a dangerous mission to stop Hitler. Pilcher has produced numerous award-winning independent feature films, including eleven movies in a long-standing collaboration with director Mira Nair and other films including *The Darjeeling Limited*, directed by Wes Anderson, and *You Don't Know Jack*, directed by Barry Levinson. She is the founder and president of Cine Mosaic, one of New York's leading independent production companies.

"It was very exciting to direct this movie about Vera Atkins, Virginia Hall, and Noor Inayat Khan, WWII spies who risked their lives in a horrific time of extreme nationalism. They understood, as many of us do today, that resistance is the key to our survival," Lydia Dean Pilcher said. "I'm hugely grateful to NYWIFT and The Ravenal Foundation for championing women directors and female perspectives to drive new and impactful creative stories."

A second-place prize of \$2,500 has also been awarded for the first time this year to Suzanne Guacci for *T11 Incomplete*, which is currently in post-production. In the film, a recovering alcoholic visiting home health aide falls in love with her paraplegic patient.

Both projects were chosen from a wide range of applications submitted by women filmmakers from around the country.

Filmmaker Cornelia Ravenal, who initiated the grant, said, "I'm thrilled to expand the grant this year to two prizes, giving the award further opportunities to elevate women directors over 40, whose perspectives are often missing from the screen."

"It is with great pride that NYWIFT and the Ravenal Foundation join forces to support women directors. The only way creative work is made is with vision, passion, endurance, and resources," said NYWIFT Executive Director Cynthia Lopez. "We were so impressed by the strong and relentless central characters depicted in each of the projects selected. Whether it is three courageous women that risk everything to change history in Lydia's project or health aide that falls loves while caring for her paraplegic patient in Suzanne's script, women's creative

voices are being elevated and we can't wait to see these films developed.”

This is the fifth year the grant is being presented. Last year it was presented to Diana Paragas for the musical film *Yellow Rose* (2019), starring Tony Award winner Lea Salonga (*Mulan*) and Tony nominee Eva Noblezada (*Miss Saigon*). *Yellow Rose* was just announced as the opening film for the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, set to run May 2-10, 2019. *Yellow Rose* tells the story of a 17-year old Filipino American girl from Texas who secretly dreams of becoming a country music star. When her mother is arrested by ICE, she runs away and embarks on a journey to forge her own path or face deportation.

Other previous awardees are Debra Kirschner for *Mallwalkers*; Rachel Feldman for *Lily* (previously called *Fair Fight*); and Janet Grillo for *Jack of the Red Hearts* (2015) which premiered at the inaugural Bentonville Film Festival in 2015.

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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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