

NYWIFT || New York Women in Film & Television

New York Women in Film & Television announces:

The Writers Lab for Women Screenwriters over 40 Opens Submissions February 1st

Acclaimed program supported by Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman welcomes award-winning writers Theresa Rebeck and Robin Swicord as mentors and expands opportunities for all applicants with *Precious* Producer Lisa Cortes webinar



New York City (February 1, 2019) – New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) and The Writers Lab co-founders Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon are pleased to announce the return of The Writers Lab for 2019. Now in its fifth year, the groundbreaking program provides exclusive mentorship opportunities with leading filmmakers to women screenwriters over the age of 40, increasing opportunities for content made by women. The program has been supported every year since its inception by Academy Award winner Meryl Streep, fostering work written by and about women, with 48 writers having completed the program to date.

The Writers Lab offers a unique and nurturing experience for 12 talented female screenwriters. Selected writers will attend a four-day retreat with outstanding female film

mentors, engaging in panels, peer discussions and one-on-one meetings October 2-6, 2019, at the Guest House Retreat Center in Chester, Connecticut.

This year the Lab is proud to welcome two new mentors, Academy Award- and Golden Globe Award-nominated screenwriter Robin Swicord (*The Promise, Wakefield, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Memoirs of A Geisha*) and Pulitzer playwright nominee and multi award-winning screenwriter Theresa Rebeck (*355, Smash, The Family of Mann, NYPD Blue, The Bells*).

The Lab will also extend its support beyond the 12 selected participants this year with an exciting new opportunity: All applicants will have access to an exclusive webinar with by Academy and Sundance Award-winning producer Lisa Cortes (*Precious, The Woodsman*).

Lab alumni have gone on to secure managers and agents, writing staff positions, college professorships, prestigious awards including The Academy Nicholl Fellowship (Vigil Chime, with her Lab script *Bring Back Girl*), and to sign production options and production deals with award-winning directors. The most recent alumni accomplishments include 2016 alum Nanci Katz Ellis' horror comedy *Rebecca and Quinn Get Scared* was picked up by New Line this month with *Pitch Perfect 3's* Trish Sie set to direct; 2018 alum Shelley Thompson won the 2018 Women in the Directors Chair Feature Film Award for her Lab script *Dawn, Her Dad & the Tractor*.

“Women’s voices are vital to our cultural conversation,” said NYWIFT Board President Simone Pero. “NYWIFT recognizes the importance of cultivating an otherwise unheard and under-served community of writers, providing them with the education and industry access to help them bring their stories to the big screen.”

“Women over 40 years have the life experience, proven survival strategies and an unparalleled drive to accomplish. I am thrilled that NYWIFT’s Writers Lab focuses on the work of mature women who are worthy of creative investment. The Writers Lab creates a one-of-a-kind nurturing environment for women writers,” said NYWIFT Executive Director Cynthia Lopez. “This program inspires and offers opportunities to cultivate new talent and a pathway to our industry.”

The call for submissions opens February 1st and closes March 14th. Submissions must be full feature-length narrative scripts of any genre written in English by women over the age of 40. The selected screenwriters will be announced August 1st. Apply via The Writers Lab website: <https://thewriterslab.nyc/apply/>

About The Writers Lab

The Writers Lab is produced by New York Women in Film & Television, with co-founders Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon, and has been supported by Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman and Oprah Winfrey. It is presented in collaboration with the Writers Guild

America, East, with in-kind support from The Black List, Film Fatales, Tribeca Film Institute, Roadmap Writers, Relativity Ventures, and Stony Brook Southampton + Manhattan. A special thank you to Final Draft for their product contribution.

The Writers Lab is dedicated to amplifying the voices of women screenwriters and strives for a new landscape where audiences have access to stories and characters from the perspective of the female gaze, where the female narrative is heard in equal proportion to the male narrative. Since 2015, The Lab has received thousands of scripts and international recognition. It has become a beacon for female filmmakers globally and expanded the ranks of employed female screenwriters.

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 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), Ligiah Villalobos (*Under the Same Moon, Firelight*).

Learn more at thewriterslab.nyc.

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.

For more information visit www.nywift.org.

About The Writers Lab Founders

The Writers Lab was founded in 2014 by Kyle Ann Stokes and co-founded by Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon. Kaiden and Wilon also design and administer the Athena Screenwriting Labs for emerging women writers, and champion women writers and their stories beyond these labs.

For more information visit thewriterslab.nyc.

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