

**NYWIFT** || New York Women  
in Film & Television

presents

2019 NYWIFT Summit



**2019 SUMMIT: : Inclusion, Equality and Safety**  
Thursday, June 27th, 2018, 4 - 8pm

NYWIFT is proud to present the **2019 Summit: Inclusion, Equality and Safety**, a series of conversations addressing the current state of power imbalances in the entertainment business.

We will examine strategies and best practices to mobilize support and leadership for the future. Featured guest speakers will paint a picture of the present moment in the industry and stimulate further discussions that educate and empower attendees to take further action.

We aim to provide a platform for the creation of strategic partnerships and to develop and distribute a report from the Summit with articles, interviews, and resources.

# Summit Schedule at a Glance

3:30pm	Doors Open
4:00 – 4:20	Opening Remarks
4:30 – 5:15	Conversation 1: Sexual Harassment/Safety
5:20 – 6:05	Conversation 2: Inclusion/Diversity
6:10 – 6:55	Conversation 3: Pay Equity
7:00 – 8:00	Reception

**Special Thanks to Cara Mertes and the Ford Foundation for Social Justice for hosting the 2019 NYWIFT Summit.**

# 2019 NYWIFT Summit Schedule

## **DOORS OPEN/REGISTRATION CHECK IN**

3:30pm

## **WELCOME**

4:00-4:05pm

**Cara Mertes**, Director, JustFilms, Ford Foundation

## **OPENING REMARKS**

4:05-4:15pm

**Cynthia López**, Executive Director, New York Women in Film & Television

**Simone Pero**, President, New York Women in Film & Television

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

4:15 - 4:25pm

**Roberta Reardon**, Commissioner, New York State Department of Labor

## **CONVERSATION 1: SEXUAL HARASSMENT / SAFETY**

4:30 - 5:15pm

**Jericka Duncan**, National Correspondent, CBS *This Morning* (Moderator)

**Leslie Silva**, Actor

**Amber Tamblyn**, Author, Actress and Director

**Sharyn Tejani**, Director, TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund

## **CONVERSATION 2: DIVERSITY / INCLUSION**

5:20 - 6:05pm

**Danielle C. Belton**, Editor-in-Chief, *The Root* (Moderator)

**Radha Blank**, Performer/Writer/Director/Producer for TV, Stage & Film

**Christina Norman**, Creative Executive, Creative Advisor to Level Forward

## **CONVERSATION 3: PAY EQUITY**

6:10 - 6:55pm

**Beverly Cooper Neufeld**, President, PowHer New York

**Rebecca Damon**, Executive VP and New York Local President, SAG-AFTRA

**Lori Sokol, Ph.D.**, Executive Director and Editor-in-Chief, *Women's eNews* (Moderator)

**CLOSING CLIPS: THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING** (Dir. Tom Donahue, Exec. Prod. Simone Pero)

7:00 - 7:15pm

## **FORD FOUNDATION RECEPTION**

7:15 - 8:00pm

# Welcome



**Cara Mertes**  
**Director, JustFilms, Ford Foundation**

Mertes' career focuses on supporting and connecting independent film communities globally as a public television executive, independent executive producer/director, funder, curator and teacher. Currently Director of Ford Foundation's JustFilms, she funds content, networks and leadership fostering independent film/digital storytelling. She has served as Director, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program and Fund and Ex-

ecutive Producer of the POV documentary series on PBS, where she was awarded with multiple Emmy, George Foster Peabody and duPont-Columbia awards. She has executive produced several Oscar-nominated films, including *Street Fight; My Country, My Country*; and *The Betrayal (Nerakhoon)* and led major Ford Foundation funding and support for Academy Award-winner *CITIZENFOUR*. She served as Executive Director of American Documentary Inc., and has taught and written about the independent documentary movement. Mertes is a member of NATAS, WGA and AMPAS.

## Opening Remarks



**Cynthia López**  
**Executive Director, NYWIFT**

López is an award-winning media strategist and former Commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, where she implemented strategies to support film and TV production throughout the five boroughs. López is the recipient of many coveted industry awards including: 11 News and Documentary Emmy Awards, a Special Emmy Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking, three Peabody Awards, and two duPont-Columbia Awards.

In addition, she received the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) Award for Commitment to Corporate Diversity. Prior to working as Commissioner, López was Executive Vice President and co-Executive Producer of the award-winning PBS documentary series *American Documentary | POV*, and was involved in the organization's strategic growth and creative development for 14 years. Her ability to forge strategic partnerships among corporate and public interest media has been a signature of her work.

## NYWIFT: State of the Field



**Simone Pero**  
**Producer and Board President, NYWIFT**

Pero is the founder of For Impact Productions, a social impact film marketing and production company. She is currently a producer of the highly-acclaimed Emmy-nominated film *The Tale*, starring Laura Dern, Ellen Burstyn and Common and is leading the film's ground-breaking outreach campaign around the world (dir. Jennifer Fox; distributed by HBO Films; U.S. Dramatic Competition, Sundance 2018). Pero is also an Executive

Producer on Tom Donahue's *This Changes Everything* with Geena Davis. Her other most notable film projects include *A Woman, A Part* with Maggie Siff; *The C Word* with Morgan Freeman; *A Woman Like Me* with Lili Taylor; and Matt Heineman and Susan Froemke's *Escape Fire: The Fight to Rescue American Healthcare*. Pero's penchant for issue-driven film began as producer of Alice Elliott's award-winning documentary *Body & Soul: Diana & Kathy*. In addition to her producing work, Pero is on the leadership team and faculty at the Stony Brook Killer Films MFA in Film program. Prior to joining the media and entertainment industry, Pero's career began in public policy and national politics.

## Emcee



**Kathryn O'Kane**  
**Producer/Director and Board Member, NYWIFT**

O'Kane is the show runner of the James Beard award-winning show *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat*, a four-part travel and culinary series on Netflix. Kathryn recently directed and produced two episodes of *Death Row Stories*, a true crime documentary series for CNN, which poses tough questions about the U.S. capital punishment system. Kathryn is a non-fiction director/producer with over fifteen years of experience in television, advertising, and web media. Her strength is

telling character-driven stories, and she's crafted narratives as diverse as *Mission Juno*, documenting NASA's probe to Jupiter, and *Talking Dead*, the hit show for AMC. Having started her career supporting democratic initiatives in Latin America, Kathryn first learned the power of messaging while organizing election observations in the Dominican Republic with President Jimmy Carter. She is honored to serve on the New York Women in Film & Television Board of Directors, which supports the careers of women in the entertainment industry.

## Keynote Address



**Roberta Reardon**  
**Commissioner, New York State**  
**Department of Labor**

New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon was appointed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in October 2015 to oversee the Department's more than 3,300 employees. On June 15, 2016, Commissioner Reardon was unanimously confirmed by the New York State Senate. Previously, Commissioner Reardon served as President of the American

Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) from 2007-2012.

She was the founding Co-President of SAG-AFTRA, a 165,000-member union for the entertainment industry, when the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) merged with AFTRA in 2012. After stepping down from that position in late 2013, Commissioner Reardon consulted for the AFL-CIO as Special Liaison for Common Sense Economics. She also taught in the Cornell/CUNY Labor Relations Certificate program.

## Conversation 1: Sexual Harassment / Safety

Panelists define sexual harassment and highlight programs and laws that work toward creating a safer work environment.



**Jericka Duncan**  
**National Correspondent, *CBS This Morning***  
**(Moderator)**

Duncan, who has been a CBS News correspondent since 2013, has reported such significant stories as accusations against R Kelly, Bill Cosby and Harvey Weinstein; the shooting deaths of four Marines and a Navy sailor in Chattanooga; the 70th anniversary of D-Day and Normandy; as well as a variety of national breaking news stories. In 2018, she spent time in Washington

D.C. covering the White House and most recently was one of the first network correspondents on the ground to cover the passage of Alabama's most restrictive abortion bill since *Roe v. Wade*.

Duncan is an Emmy-nominated journalist who has received several awards for her reporting, including two National Edward M. Murrow Awards from the Radio Television Digital News Association, and honors from the Associated Press and the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists, which named her Journalist of the Year in 2012. Duncan graduated from Ohio University in 2005 with a degree in communications. She is a 2005 NAACP Image Award recipient. In 2006, she was a fellow at a North Carolina A&T conference on childhood obesity.



## Leslie Silva Actor

Leslie Silva is a Juilliard graduate with over 25 years of experience in TV/Film/Theater/Radio, most recently starring in *In the Dark* (The CW) and *The Looming Tower* (Hulu). Other notable projects: *The Master Builder*, *Shades of Blue* (NBC), and *Star Trek: Enterprise*. She directed the NY premiere production of *Orange Alert*. She is also a professional fine arts photographer, turning

found items into sculpture and then capturing them in photos. You can see the work at [www.lesliesilvaphotography.com](http://www.lesliesilvaphotography.com). Silva is one of the founding members of Times Up (TU) and Times up WOC. A few weeks ago, she lobbied, along with other TU members, to pass the TUNY safety agenda which extends the statute of limitations for 2nd and 3rd degree rape. It passed.



(photo credit: Katie Jacobs)

## Amber Tamblyn Author, Actress and Director

Tamblyn has been nominated for an Emmy, Golden Globe and Independent Spirit Award for her work in television and film. She is the author of three books of poetry including the critically acclaimed best seller, *Dark Sparkler*. She is the author of the novel *Any Man*, which follows the lives of a group of men who are attacked by a female serial rapist, as well as the non-fiction collection, *Era of Ignition: Coming of Age During a*

*Time of Rage and Revolution on Crown Archetype*. Tamblyn wrote and directed the feature film *Paint It Black*, based on the novel by Janet Fitch, starring Alia Shawkat, Janet McTeer and Alfred Molina. She reviews books of poetry by women for *Bust Magazine* and is poet in residence at Amy Poehler's Smart Girls. She is a contributing writer for *The New York Times* and a founding member of Time's Up.



## Sharyn Tejani Director, TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund

Prior to her role at the Legal Defense Fund, Tejani served as a Deputy Chief at the Employment Litigation Section of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. In that role, she supervised the investigation and litigation of cases on behalf of workers facing sex harassment, pregnancy discrimination, and employment barriers that unjustly screen out women and people of color. Tejani has spent her legal career working

on issues of civil rights and women's rights. Prior to joining the U.S. Department of Justice in 2010, Tejani was the Director of the Workplace Fairness Program at the National Partnership for Women & Families and the Legal Director of the Feminist Majority Foundation. She also worked at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as an Attorney Advisor to Commissioner Stuart J. Ishimaru. Tejani began her legal career as an honors attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. She attended Yale University and Georgetown University Law Center.



## Conversation 2: Inclusion / Diversity

Panelists discuss why representation matters and give examples of initiatives to implement a more diverse and intersectional environment.



**Danielle C. Belton**  
Editor-in-Chief, *The Root* (Moderator)

Born and raised in St. Louis on a healthy diet of news programming, pop culture, black history and “snark,” Belton examines the irreverent side of American life. She is currently editor-in-chief for *The Root*, the leading African American news site for news and commentary. With two million readers in less than two years, Belton is best known as the editor/writer of her pop culture-meets-politics blog *The Black Snob*. The site

has a readership spanning political junkies, journalists, fellow bloggers, political pundits, authors, academics, legislators and political strategists. Belton and her site has earned widespread critical acclaim, appearing in *The New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *The Observer (UK)*, *The Daily Beast*, *NPR*, and she has also been a featured guest on CNN, ABC’s *Nightline* and *Good Morning America*, NBC’s *Today Show*, MSNBC’s *The Last Word with Lawrence O’Donnell* and makes regular appearances on PBS’s *To the Contrary with Bonnie Erbe* and NPR’s *Tell Me More with Michel Martin*. Belton has contributed to: MSNBC, *Essence Magazine*, *Mediaite*, PBS’ *To The Contrary*, NPR’s *Tell Me More*, *The American Prospect*, *The Root*, *The Grio*, *Jezebel.com*, *Essence.com*, *UPTOWN* magazine online, *Black Enterprise* magazine online, *The Huffington Post* and many more. In 2012, Belton was Head Writer for BET Network’s late night offering *Don’t Sleep* hosted by former CNN anchor T. J. Holmes.



**Radha Blank**  
Performer/Writer/Director/Producer for TV, Stage and Film

Blank is a native New Yorker, performer and writer for TV, stage and film. Her plays include *HappyFlowerNail*, *Casket Sharp*, *nannyland* and the critically acclaimed *SEED*. She’s a Helen Merrill Playwriting Award recipient, an NEA New Play Development Award recipient and a NYFA Fellow. Blank’s television writing work includes *The Get Down* (Netflix), *Empire* (FOX) and *She’s*

*Gotta Have It* (Netflix), where she’s worked as producer/writer for two seasons. She co-wrote *All Rise*, Anthony Mandler’s big screen adaptation of Walter Dean Myers’ best-selling novel *Monster*, which will be released this Fall. Blank was a fellow for both the 2017 Sundance Directors and Screenwriters Labs with her original screenplay *The 40-YearOld Version (FYOV)*, which won The 2017 Adrienne Shelly Women’s Filmmaker Award and The 2018 Maryland Film Festival Producers Club Award. When not writing, Blank performs as emcee RadhaMUSprime, whose brand of hip hop comedy, has sold out shows from New York to Norway. She is currently writing the feature film script for Malcolm Lee’s latest Universal Pictures comedy *Real Talk*. This summer, Radha will write, direct and star in her first feature film, *The 40-Year-Old Version (F.Y.O.V.)*.



**Christina Norman**  
**Creative Executive, Creative Advisor to**  
**Level Forward**

An accomplished creative executive, Norman has launched, transformed, led and grown brands and businesses. Currently, she serves as a creative advisor to Level Forward, a new breed entertainment company producing multi-platform stories to drive industry and economic transformation. Previously, she was CEO of the Water Cooler Group, an agency specializing in marketing for the entertainment industry. As CEO of OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network, she managed all creative, strategy and operations for the network. Christina came to OWN from Viacom, where she spent 17 years rising through the organization to ultimately lead some of the world's biggest media brands. She has been recognized with a variety of industry honors including Multichannel News' "Wonder Woman", Cable Fax's "Most Powerful Women and Influential Minorities", and has been included in *The Hollywood Reporter's* "Power100 Women in Entertainment." She received a National Public Service award from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for MTV's "Fight For Your Rights: Protect Yourself" campaign. She serves on the Board of BRIC Arts Media Brooklyn.

## **Conversation 3: Pay Equity**

Panelists examine the extent of the gender pay gap in our industry and highlight programs, incentives, and campaigns that work towards pay equity.



**Beverly Cooper Neufeld**  
**President, PowHer New York**

To address the slow progress on women's economic issues, Beverly Neufeld envisioned PowHer New York: a community of 100+ organizations working across typical barriers to advance a multi-issue agenda, energize a movement, and accelerate progress. It is one of the innovative projects she has created as President of BCN Consulting Group which helps nonprofits create change. Beverly inspired and leads a decade-long statewide campaign for pay equity reform, now a signature program of PowHer New York. The Equal Pay Campaign influenced the passage of critical legislation including the NYS Women's Equality Act and Equal Pay Act, the NYC and NYS Salary History Ban, and NYS Paid Family Leave law. She is a member the NYS Council for Women and Girls, the NYC Commission on Gender Equity, the national equal pay task force, and the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), a global initiative to address wage inequity. As Executive Director of The White House Project, she oversaw research on women's leadership and helped develop SheSource and Vote, Run, Lead. Beverly was President of the New York Women's Agenda, Finance Director for Congresswoman Nita Lowey, and served on the boards of 2020 Women on Boards, Free the Children, Sing for Hope, Women's Campaign Forum, and Westchester Children's Association.



**Rebecca Damon**  
**Executive Vice President and New York**  
**Local President, SAG-AFTRA**

A New York-based actor and voiceover performer, Rebecca Damon was first elected SAG-AFTRA executive vice president, the union's second highest office, in 2016. She was re-elected to a two-year term in 2017. Damon was also appointed in 2017 by the board to serve as president of the New York Local. She is national chair of the Government Review Committee, chair of

the MOVE New York Committee, and serves on the Executive, Finance and Government Affairs and Public Policy committees. Currently serving on the President's Task Force on Education, Outreach and Engagement and as chair of the Member Outreach Relations & Education Committee, she is a fierce advocate for education and empowerment of performers nationwide. During her tenure as Screen Actors Guild New York Division Vice President, she was a founding member of both the SAG President's Forum for One Union and the joint Group for One Union, helping lead the effort to unite SAG and AFTRA. As co-leader of the Operations Workgroup, Rebecca was a key architect of the merger. She is also a vice president of the SAG-AFTRA Foundation, an educational, humanitarian and philanthropic non-profit organization. She is the primary elected liaison for Foundation programming in New York and oversaw creation of the Robin Williams Center for Entertainment and Media in Times Square.



**Lori Sokol**  
**Ph.D., Executive Director and**  
**Editor-in-Chief, Women's eNews**  
**(Moderator)**

Dr. Sokol is the Executive Director and Editor-in-Chief of *Women's eNews*, a global non-profit news organization serving 2.5 million readers. Celebrating its 20th anniversary next year, *Women's eNews* reports on the most crucial issues impacting women and girls around the world, and is the recipient of numerous jour-

nalism awards. Sokol's news articles and commentary, which primarily focus on gender and LGBTQIA issues, have been published in the *Baltimore Sun*, *Huff Post*, and *Slate.com*. She has also been interviewed in a variety of major media including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes.com*, *MSNBC*, *CNBC* and *Fox Five Live*. She has also served as keynote speaker at several women's empowerment conferences throughout Asia and Europe. Her new book, *#ShelsMe: How Women Will Save the World*, will be published in August 2020.

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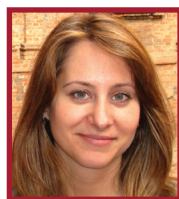
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## Notes

