

EMBARGOED FOR THURSDAY AUGUST 1st at 11:30AM ET, PLEASE

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**THE WRITERS LAB for WOMEN SCREENWRITERS OVER 40
SELECTS PARTICIPANTS FOR 5th ANNUAL WRITERS RETREAT**

**Supported by Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman,
Produced by co-founders Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon
and New York Women in Film & Television,
Presented in collaboration with the Writers Guild of America, East,**

The Writers Lab Celebrates its 5th Anniversary

**Mentors include producers Susan Cartsonis, Shruti Ganguly, and Mary Jane Skalski,
and screenwriters Lisa Jones, Theresa Rebeck, Robin Swicord, and Pat Verducci**

**In addition, The Writers Lab launches new podcast
First episode features a conversation between
producer Lisa Cortes and screenwriter Amy Fox**

New York, NY – August 1, 2019 – The Writers Lab co-founders Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon and New York Women in Film & Television announced the 12 screenwriters to participate in the 5th year of The Writers Lab. Launched in 2015, the program is the only lab in the world devoted exclusively to script development for women writers over the age of 40. It creates a springboard to the next stage of production and expands the boundaries of today’s commercial narrative film. Many past participants have seen their scripts optioned and / or are actively working in writers’ rooms.

“I am so proud The Writers Lab has thrived and grown in these five years, and has functioned as a springboard for so much promising talent. As the supply catches up with the demand from an audience previously ignored in film history, the prospects grow ever brighter - Brava Divas!”

~ Meryl Streep

“Congratulations to this incredible group of emerging talent and to The Writers Lab for continuing to build a space for women to work with one another and develop the stories they want to tell. As more stories by and about women ripple outward, more opportunities are created for women on both sides of the camera.”

~ Nicole Kidman

“You might have noticed that the industry is in a rut. Our mission is to put women in the driver’s seat to haul this rig out,” say Kaiden and Wilon. “The stories we’re seeing this year are topical and boundary-pushing - immigration, sex, female-driven thrillers, fantasy and magical realism, and out-of-the-box indies - these topics are on the minds of women over 40.”

“The Writers Lab is an example of our long-standing commitment to intersectional inclusion,” said New York Women in Film & Television Executive Director Cynthia Lopez: “We are so proud of the community of The Writers Lab participants – past and present – that has been created and continues to thrive.”

The Writers Lab is supported by Meryl Streep and Nicole Kidman, and is produced by New York Women in Film & Television with co-founders Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon. It is presented in collaboration with the Writers Guild of America, East, with in-kind support from The Black List, Falco Ink, Film Fatales, Relativity Ventures, Roadmap Writers, Stony Brook Manhattan Center for Creative Writing & Film, and Tribeca Film Institute. A special thank you to Final Draft for their product contribution.

This year’s mentors include

Susan Cartsonis: A top grossing producer (*What Women Want, Where the Heart Is, The Duff, Carrie Pilby*)

Shruti Ganguly: Award-winning producer, writer and director (*The Color of Time, Initials S.G.*)

Lisa Jones: Author and Screenwriter (*Disappearing Acts, The Wedding*)

Theresa Rebeck: Playwright, Screenwriter (Jessica Chastain’s upcoming *355, Trouble, Catwoman*), Television Writer, Novelist

Mary Jane Skalski: Producer (*Hello I Must Be Going, The Visitor, The Station Agent*)

Robin Swicord: Academy Award nominated screenwriter (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*) whose work includes *Memoirs of a Geisha, Little Women* and others

Pat Verducci: Writer / Director (*True Crime*), Professor, Script Editor, Story Consultant

The Lab is an intensive four-day script development retreat for women screenwriters over 40. Meeting one on one and in panels with outstanding female film professionals, as well as in peer groups and directed discussion sessions focused on craft and the industry, talented writers examine and refine their work while building a unique and powerful community.

The 12 participants of The Writers Lab 2019 are:

Tara Orr Brenninkmeyer, *The Fledgling*

Susan Brunig, *The Surveillance of Ordinary Things*

Tricia Cerrone, *The Skeleton Watch*

Meg Waite Clayton, *The Last Train to London*

Jiwon Lee, *At Sea*

Ann LeSchander, *Picking Up Porter Douglas*

Julie O'Hora, *Extreme Closeup*

Alyson Richards, *The Retreat*

Miatta Ronca, *Blue World*

Kenyetta Raelyn, *Borderline*

C.C. Webster, *Little Buffalo*

Elizabeth Ziemka, *Hunt Relic*

In addition, as an ongoing resource, The Writers Lab will be launching a new podcast about the art and commerce of screenwriting. The first episode features a conversation between past Lab mentors: producer Lisa Cortes (*The Apollo, Double Play, Shadowboxer*) and writer Amy Fox (*Equity, The Conners*).

ABOUT THE WRITERS LAB

Founded by Kyle Stokes with Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon, and produced with New York Women in Film & Television, The Writers Lab is dedicated to developing narrative feature screenplays written by women over the age of 40. We work toward gender parity, and believe that shared stories strengthen our ties to one another. The Writers Lab supports well crafted scripts, in all genres, that explore universal themes and use a full range of cinematic tools.

ABOUT NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION (NYWIFT)

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.

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