

NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION



presents the 41st annual

MUSE AWARDS

ART AND ADVOCACY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2020



The New York Times Company congratulates Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, who have been named **2020 Muse Award honorees** by **New York Women in Film & Television**.

NYWIFT || New York Women
in Film & Television

presents

41st ANNUAL

MUSE AWARDS

FOR VISION AND ACHIEVEMENT

Thursday, December 17, 2020

1:00 PM (ET) Awards Celebration
Online Networking Immediately Following

Presented Virtually

HONORING



Awkwafina
Actor
*The Mayor's Office
of Media &
Entertainment
Made in NY Award*



**Rachel
Brosnahan**
Actor and
Producer



Rashida Jones
Actor, Writer,
Producer,
Director



Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey
Journalists



Alana Mayo
President of
Orion Pictures



**Gina Prince-
Bythewood**
Director, Writer,
Producer
*Nancy Malone
Directing Award*



Ali Stroker
Actor
*Loreen Arbus
Changemaker
Award*

DAVID YURMAN



is proud to
design
the 2020
Muse Award

**Congratulations
to this year's
honorees**

NYWIFT || New York Women
in Film & Television



From the Executive Director

We hope all of you are ready to be inspired. The women we honor this year are dedicated game-changers in the media and entertainment industry from the studios to television to journalism.

We hope you'll enjoy this additional look at our honorees and the intimate photographs from moments that were instrumental in their creative development.

To all the honorees: thank you. Thank you for inspiring and elevating us with your infectious energy and creative spirit. Thank you for saying 'yes' to being part of the 2020 MUSE Awards. To survive the pandemic, we all need your wit, talent, and work.

2020 is a year unlike any other, and this MUSE Awards is unlike any other. Shifting a 1,200 in-person event to a virtual program is like quickly changing course on a schooner during a storm. It is nearly impossible. The challenges we faced in producing this program were stark and relentless. In all my years of experience, I have never dealt with the consistent daily rigorous challenges we had to overcome. We had footage from nine different sources, worked remotely, had a virtual director, and the schedule felt like a rolling 24-hour calendar that never ended. We are beyond grateful to our production crew who made today possible, for their incredible dedication and relentless problem-solving. A special thank you to our creative team Katie, Easmanie, Jennifer, and Alex. In addition, thank you to Maud, Frank PR and the rest of the NYWIFT team for making it all work! A special heartfelt thanks to the NYWIFT Board led by President Jamie Zelermyer for the ongoing vision and support and Alex for your creativity. To our production partners Zenaida at El Barrio Firehouse and Gretchen at Goldcrest, having you with us was invaluable. Finally, thank you to Maite and Gail at CUNY TV, our educational partner that will broadcast MUSE 2020 next year.

A celebration like this year's MUSE would not be possible without the investment of foundations, corporations, and individuals that have supported us during this critical time. I believe the strength of community is measured by how it responds to crisis and uncertainty. We will get through this together.

Mrs. Cynthia Lopez



Awkwafina

The Mayor's Office of Media & Entertainment Made in NY Award

AWKWAFINA is a Golden Globe-winning actress, writer, and musician from Queens, New York. She grew up with her given name,

Nora Lum, and has used her trademark comedic style and signature flair to become a breakout talent in the entertainment industry. Lum created and stars in the Comedy Central Show *Awkwafina Is Nora From Queens*, and was recently seen in *Jumanji: The Next Level*. She will star in Disney's *Raya and the Last Dragon* and Marvel's *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* in 2021..

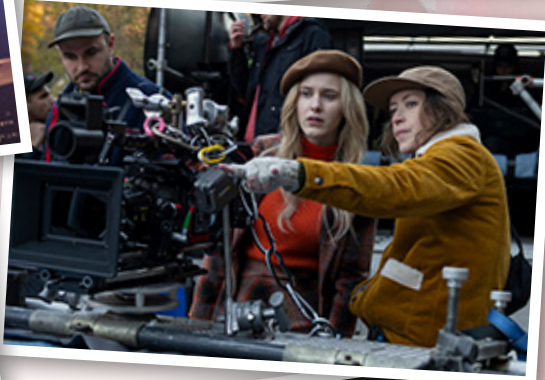
Lum received glowing reviews for her starring role in the indie darling *The Farewell*. For that role she won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress—Motion Picture—Musical or Comedy. The film is based on a true story about a family saying goodbye to their beloved matriarch—the only person who doesn't know she is dying. In its first weekend in four theaters only, the film beat the record of biggest per-theater average of the year, previously held by *Avengers: Endgame*, the second best-selling movie in history. The small family drama quickly won over viewers and critics alike, with many calling it one of the best films of 2019.

Lum brings an impressive range of talent to everything she does, most famously to the Warner Bros. smash hit *Crazy Rich Asians*. The film opened in 2018 to rave reviews and four straight weekends of more than \$20 million at the box office. Lum hosted *Saturday Night Live* that same year.

She starred in another Warner Bros feature, *Ocean's 8*, and alongside an impeccable ensemble cast, including Sandra Bullock, Cate Blanchett, Anne Hathaway, Mindy Kaling, Sarah Paulson, Rihanna, and Helena Bonham Carter. Prior to that, she starred in the indie comedy *Dude*.

In 2016, Lum made her feature film debut in the comedy *Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising*, and was heard as the voice of Quail in the animated adventure *Storks*. Her first book, *Awkwafina's NYC*, a travel guide to New York, was published by Penguin Random House in 2015.

Lum became an internet sensation in 2012 with her satirical work in the viral video "My Vag," and her 2014 debut album, which featured her acclaimed raps "NYC Bitche\$," "Mayor Bloomberg (Giant Margarita)," and the title track, "Yellow Ranger."



Rachel Brosnahan

RACHEL BROSNAHAN is an award-winning actress and producer. She has won an Emmy with four nominations, two Golden Globes, two Critics Choice Awards, and three SAG Awards. Brosnahan recently signed a first-look deal with Amazon Studios with her company Scrap Paper Pictures to develop television series exclusive to Amazon Prime Video. She produced and stars in the recently released *I'm Your Woman*, an Amazon Studios movie directed by Julia Hart and co-written with Jordan Horowitz. Up next, she will be seen in the historical drama *The Courier*, alongside Benedict Cumberbatch, which will be released in the United States in early 2021 by Roadside Attractions and by Lionsgate UK. She is also attached to star in and produce *The Switch* with Amblin Partners. Other film credits include *Patriots Day*, *The Finest Hours*, *Louder Than Bombs*, and *Beautiful Creatures*.

Brosnahan currently stars as Miriam "Midge" Maisel on the Amazon series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. Since the series premiered in 2017, the show has earned an Emmy, a Golden Globe, and two Critics Choice Awards. Brosnahan had a breakout turn as Rachel Posner in Netflix's groundbreaking series *House of Cards*, which earned her an Emmy nomination—her first—as well as a SAG nomination for Best Ensemble. In addition, she has starred in two seasons of the critically-acclaimed WGN series *Manhattan* and is an executive producer of a series adaptation of Corey Camperchioli's short film *Femme*. On stage, Brosnahan starred as Desdemona in Sam Gold's off-Broadway production of *Othello* opposite Daniel Craig and David Oyelowo. She made her Broadway debut in 2013 in *The Big Knife* opposite Bobby Cannavale.

Brosnahan is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she studied at The Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute. She currently serves on the board of Covenant House, which oversees programs for homeless youth and has been an ambassador for Global Citizen for the past six years.



Rashida Jones

RASHIDA JONES has forged a singular path as an actor, writer, producer, and director.

Currently, Jones stars in Sofia Coppola's *On the Rocks* opposite Bill Murray. The film had its world premiere at the New York Film Festival in September and was released in October by

A24 and Apple TV+. Jones also recently starred in, executive produced, and directed a pivotal episode of *#blackAF*, a half-hour comedy created by Kenya Barris for Netflix. Additionally, Jones voices the character of Mia on Fox's *Duncanville*.

Jones recently launched a podcast with Bill Gates called *Bill Gates and Rashida Jones Ask Big Questions*. Each week, the two hosts tackle some of the biggest questions facing us today: Is it too late to solve climate change? Does everybody lie? Is inequality inevitable? Their premiere episode featured Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Jones is writing, and co-executive producing with Kerry Washington, the 20th Century Fox project *Goldie Vance*. Under their Le Train Train banner, Will McCormack and Jones executive produced TNT's hit dramedy *Claws* for four seasons, and *Centerpiece* and *Filthy Animals* for Quibi. They will executive-produce *Kevin Can F*** Himself* for AMC.

Jones co-directed *Quincy* with Al Hicks, which won numerous awards, including a Grammy for Best Music Film. Additional directing credits include the music video for Sara Bareilles's "Brave" (which has over 100 million views on YouTube), an animated Time's Up PSA, and episodic work on *#blackAF* and *Angie Tribeca*.

Jones produced the Emmy-nominated documentary *Hot Girls Wanted* and, along with collaborators Jill Bauer and Ronna Gradus, Jones produced, co-created, and directed the follow up Netflix anthology *Hot Girls Wanted: Turned On*. Her writing credits include "Nosedive," the first episode in the third series of *Black Mirror*.

Acting film credits include Oscar-nominated and BAFTA-winning *Klaus*; *Spies in Disguise*; *The Social Network*; *Celeste* and *Jesse Forever*; *I Love You, Man*; and *The Muppets*. Television credits include *Angie Tribeca*; *Parks and Recreation*; *The Office*; *Boston Public*; *Freaks and Geeks*; *Chappelle's Show*; and *Portlandia*.

Jones is a co-founder of Time's Up. She is also a voice for the International Rescue Committee.



Jodi Kantor & Megan Twohey

In October 2017, **JODI KANTOR** and **MEGAN TWOHEY** broke the story of decades of sexual abuse allegations against Harvey Weinstein. Their work helped ignite the #MeToo movement, shift attitudes, and spur new laws, policies, and standards of accountability around the globe. Together with a team of colleagues who exposed harassment across industries, they were awarded the Pulitzer Prize for public service, one of journalism's highest awards. They also received or shared in numerous other honors, including a George Polk Award and being named to *Time* magazine's list of 100 Most Influential People of the Year.

She Said, Kantor and Twohey's book recounting the Weinstein investigation, was called "an instant classic of investigative journalism" by *The Washington Post* and one of the best books of 2019 by the New York Public Library, NPR, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Time*, and many other publications.



JODI KANTOR is a prize-winning investigative reporter and best-selling author whose work has revealed hidden truths about power, gender, technology, politics, and culture.

Kantor's article about the havoc caused by automated scheduling systems in Starbucks workers' lives spurred changes at the company and helped spark a national fair-scheduling movement. After she and David Streitfeld

investigated punishing practices at Amazon's corporate headquarters, the company changed its human resources policies, introducing paternity leave and eliminating its employee ranking system. Kantor's report on working mothers and breastfeeding inspired two readers to create the first free-standing lactation suites for nursing mothers, now available in hundreds of airports and stadiums.

For six years, Kantor wrote about Barack and Michelle Obama. Kantor's best-selling book *The Obamas*, about their behind-the-scenes adjustment to the jobs of president and first lady, was published in 2012. Kantor, a contributor to *CBS This Morning*, lives in Brooklyn with her husband, Ron Lieber, and their two daughters. Follow her work on social media @jodikantor.

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WARNERMEDIA IS PROUD TO SUPPORT NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION AND THE MUSE AWARDS.

WarnerMedia



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MEGAN TWOHEY is an investigative reporter for *The New York Times* and has reported on Donald J. Trump, helping to reveal allegations of sexual misconduct against him, his business interests in Russia, and illegal efforts to silence two women who claimed they had affairs with him.

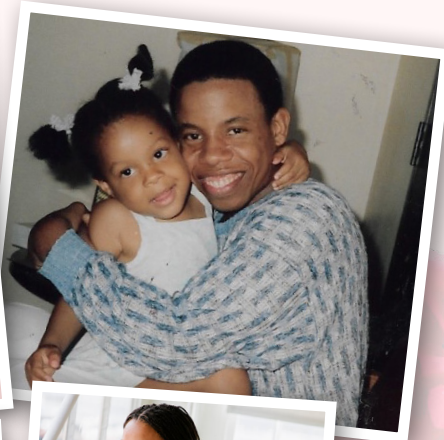
Twohey exposed an underground network where parents gave away adopted children they no longer wanted to strangers met on the Internet in a practice known as “re-homing.” The series, “The Child Exchange,” showed how this dangerous black market operated with no government oversight and at great risk to children and was a finalist for the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. Twohey was one of the first journalists to expose how police and prosecutors were shelving DNA evidence collected after sex crimes, robbing victims of the chance for justice. In response to her stories, Illinois passed the first state law mandating the testing of every rape kit. Twohey is a contributor to NBC and MSNBC. A native of Evanston, Illinois, she lives in Brooklyn with her husband and daughter.

CONGRATULATIONS to the 2020 NYWIFT Muse Awards Honorees

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Jennifer J. Wollan, President



Alana Mayo

As the president of Orion Pictures, veteran industry executive and producer **ALANA MAYO** oversees the label's day-to-day operations, including development, acquisitions, physical, and post-production. Orion Pictures, a division of MGM, is dedicated to underrepresented voices and authentic storytelling in film with a focus on developing, producing, and acquiring feature films that amplify underserved voices, both in front of and behind the camera.

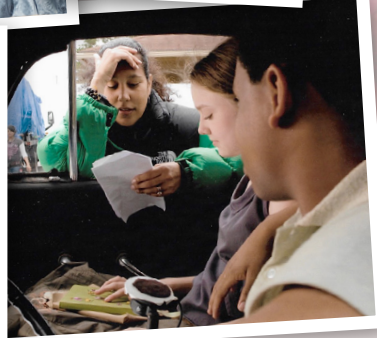
Mayo most recently served as head of production and development for Outlier Society, a multi-platform production and media company led by actor Michael B. Jordan, where she oversaw the company's slate of films (in partnership with Warner Bros.) and television series (in partnership with Amazon Studios). There, Mayo led the charge with Jordan to create opportunities for more equitable hiring in Hollywood with the launch of a first-of-its-kind company-wide inclusion policy, in partnership with WarnerMedia. *Just Mercy*, was the first film made under the new initiative.

The slate of Outlier Society films projects overseen by Mayo also included *Without Remorse* for Paramount Pictures; a film adaptation of the fantasy novel *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*; an untitled original monster movie from Jordan Vogt-Roberts; and World War II action drama *The Liberators*.

During Mayo's tenure, Outlier Society co-produced the Emmy-nominated HBO Films adaptation of *Fahrenheit 451*; *61st Street* for AMC; the OWN drama series *David Makes Man*; *Raising Dion*; the comedy feature *Fashionably Black*, for HBO Max; and the series *Friday Black*.

Previously, Mayo served as vice president of production at Paramount Pictures, where she worked on films including *A Quiet Place*, *Annihilation*, and *Fences*. In her previous role as production executive for the studio, she worked on the Academy Award-winning *The Big Short*; *13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi*; and the Academy Award Best Picture nominee *Selma*.

Following her time at Paramount, Mayo worked with Vimeo as the company's vice president and head of original development. Born in New York and raised in Chicago, Mayo graduated from Columbia University with a BA in English and film studies.



Gina Prince-Bythewood

Nancy Malone Directing Award

Award-winning director, writer, and producer **GINA PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD** is one of the

most versatile storytellers working in film and television. Known for her authentic character-driven work, Prince-Bythewood has directed and written such influential feature films as *Love & Basketball*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, and *Beyond the Lights*.

Most recent from Prince-Bythewood is the Netflix action drama feature *The Old Guard*, which she directs and which stars Charlize Theron and Kiki Layne. The blockbuster is already among the Top 10 most popular Netflix films of all time since its July release, with Prince-Bythewood becoming the first Black female director on that list.

Other recent credits include the special event series *Shots Fired*, for which she and her husband, Reggie Rock Bythewood, served as series creators and executive producers. The series for Fox examines the dangerous aftermath of two racially-charged shootings in a small town. In addition, Prince-Bythewood directed the pilot for Marvel's *Cloak & Dagger*.

Prince-Bythewood's next feature film project will be directing the historical epic *The Woman King* for TriStar Pictures, starring Viola Davis. *The Woman King* is inspired by true events that took place in the kingdom of Dahomey, one of the most powerful states of Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. For television, Prince-Bythewood will direct the first episode and serve as an executive producer of ABC's limited series *Women of the Movement*, set to debut in 2021. It will focus on Mamie Till Mobley, who devoted her life to seeking justice for her son Emmett Till following his brutal murder in the Jim Crow South.

In August, Prince-Bythewood and Reggie Rock Bythewood signed a multi-year first-look deal with Touchstone Television under their production company, Undisputed Cinema. The versatile duo's Undisputed Cinema produces timely and timeless character-driven stories aimed at challenging audiences' perspectives in different ways. An advocate for equal representation in film and television both on screen and behind the scenes, Prince-Bythewood funds a scholarship for African-American students in the film program at UCLA, her alma mater.



Ali Stroker

Loren Arbus Changemaker Award

ALI STROKER won the 2019 Tony Award for Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her role as “Ado Annie” in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!* She’ll next be seen starring in the 2020 Lifetime holiday film, *Christmas Ever After*.

Stroker made history as the first actor in a wheelchair to appear on Broadway in Deaf West’s acclaimed 2015 revival of *Spring Awakening*. She starred in 12 episodes of *The Glee Project*, winning a guest role on Fox’s *Glee*. She recurred in the ABC series *Ten Days in the Valley* and guest starred on Freeform’s *The Bold Type*, Fox’s *Lethal Weapon*, CBS’s *Instinct*, the CW’s *Charmed*, and Comedy Central’s *Drunk History*.

Stroker has performed her cabaret act at The Green Room 42 and soloed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.; and in New York at The Town Hall; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; and Carnegie Hall.

A humanitarian and advocate, Stroker has been a co-chair of Women Who Care, which supports United Cerebral Palsy of New York City. She’s a founding member of Be More Heroic, an anti-bullying campaign which toured the country connecting with thousands of students each year. Her devotion to educating and inspiring others brought Stroker to South Africa with ARTS InsideOut, where she held theater workshops and classes for women and children affected by HIV and AIDS.

Her mission to improve the lives of others, disabled or not, through the arts is captured in her motto: turning your limitations into your opportunities.



Loreen Arbus Changemaker Award

This award, created in 2006 with the generous support of NYWIFT member Loreen Arbus, recognizes the contributions of individuals, organizations, and corporations in the entertainment industry who have been activists for change benefiting women. NYWIFT believes that by honoring those who have made a difference, we will inspire others to action.



About Loreen Arbus

Loreen Arbus is the president of the Loreen Arbus Foundation, the Goldenson-Arbus Foundation, and Loreen Arbus Productions, Inc. Her philanthropy supports a broad scope of interests. She has established and continues to fund many scholarships that both enhance and elevate social consciousness around her philanthropic interests—scientific and medical research, public policy, the arts, media responsibility, and human and animal rights. Also, Arbus was the first woman to head programming for a U.S. network, a feat accomplished twice (at both Showtime and CableHealth Network/Lifetime). Arbus, widely recognized for her humanitarian and professional accomplishments, received the Heart of Giving Award presented by President Bill Clinton in 2001 and was chosen as one (of 40) Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World in 2002. She lives in New York City, Los Angeles, and Buenos Aires and is a high-profile Argentine tango choreographer and professional dancer.



Nancy Malone Directing Award

One of the first women directors in television, Nancy Malone was an Emmy Award-winning producer and director. She began her career as an actress, worked as an executive, and then became a producer and director. In 1976, she became the first female vice-president of television at 20th Century Fox. In 2007, she was inducted as an honoree into the "She Made It: Women Creating Television and Radio" collection at the Paley Center for Media. She was a founding member of Women in Film in Los Angeles who dedicated her life to women's advancement in film, television, and digital media.



Nancy Giles

Emcee

CBS *Sunday Morning* contributor, comedian, actress, and self-described "accidental pundette" **NANCY GILES** is a funny, perceptive, and provocative observer of today's world.

For over 14 years, Giles's work on the Emmy Award-winning CBS *Sunday Morning* has received acclaim for its unique blend of common sense wisdom, laugh-out-loud humor, and social and political commentary.

A veteran of Chicago's esteemed Second City improv troupe and winner of the Theatre World Award for the off-Broadway musical *Mayor*, Giles appeared for three seasons on the TV drama *China Beach*. She has made appearances on *Law & Order*, *Spin City*, and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Her one-woman shows include *The Further Adventures of the Accidental Pundette*, *Notes of a Negro Neurotic*, and *Black Comedy: The Wacky Side of Racism*, which the *Village Voice* called "smart and unforgiving." Giles recently appeared off-Broadway in *Good for Otto* by David Rabe.

Giles has offered her perspectives as a frequent guest on *The Today Show* and *The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell*.

An accomplished voiceover and radio artist, Giles has been the voice of the Food Network for over 10 years. Her diverse credits include work for Office Depot, True Value, Tide, *The New York Times*, Yoplait, Avenue clothing stores, Lifetime, ABC Daytime, *PB&J Otter* on the Disney Channel, Edible Schoolyard NYC, and Nickelodeon's *Mighty Bug 5*. Giles won back-to-back Gracies from the Alliance for Women in Media for her CBS Radio show on WPHT-AM in Philadelphia. Her podcast, *The Giles Files*, takes a lively look at trending topics—from pop culture to politics—with interviews, commentaries, song parodies, and more.

For more than 20 years, she has volunteered with the 52nd St. Project, helping at-risk kids take part in acting, playwriting, and poetry workshops.

KUDOS.

2020 MUSE AWARDS HONOREES

AWKWAFINA

*The Mayor's Office of Media &
Entertainment Made in NY Award*

ALI STROKER

Loreen Arbus Changemaker Award

GINA PRINCE-BYTHEWOOD

Nancy Malone Directing Award

RACHEL BROSNAHAN

RASHIDA JONES

JODI KANTOR & MEGAN TWOHEY

ALANA MAYO



EST. 1905

REPORTING REAL NEWS SINCE 1905

The Muse Awards

New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) has presented the Muse Awards annual gala holiday luncheon celebrating the vision and achievements of women who work in the entertainment industry since 1980. Each year, remarkable and accomplished women are honored with this prestigious award. The awards ceremony is one of NYWIFT's flagship events—a highlight of the New York City holiday season in the entertainment industry—and is attended by an enthusiastic audience of 1,200 leading executives from every major studio, broadcast and cable network, and film production facility.

Since establishing the event in 1980, when the very first Muse Award was given to legendary film critic Pauline Kael, NYWIFT has honored some of the most talented and influential women in all aspects of the entertainment industry.

Organization Profile

New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) advocates for equality in the moving image industry and supports women at 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.

Supporting NYWIFT

Become a member: Membership is open to women and men with a minimum of four years of professional experience above entry level in film, television, or digital media. Apply at www.nywift.org/join.

Make a donation: Support our professional development and advocacy initiatives by making a contribution at www.nywift.org/donate.

Honor your legacy: NYWIFT's LightsCameraAction Society is dedicated to helping women in entertainment for many generations to come by means of bequests and other planned gifts to NYWIFT. Learn more at www.lightscameraaction.org.

New York Women in Film & Television

6 East 39th Street, 12th Floor • New York, NY 10016

www.nywift.org

NYWIFT in 2020

When the COVID-19 crisis began in March, NYWIFT quickly pivoted to digital. We have continued to serve our community with all of our regular services, panels, workshops and seminars—now provided in virtual form—and have increased programming by 60 percent. As a result, our community has grown and become even more vital.

NYWIFT Talks

We launched the new NYWIFT Talks weekly series with industry in conversation about the evolving world we live in, from the pandemic's economic impact on the industry, to the logistical implications of filming during COVID, to artists' and executives' responses to the surging Black Lives Matter movement, to how to capitalize on virtual screening opportunities, and more.

All NYWIFT Talks can be viewed on the new [NYWIFT Programming Goes Digital](#) hub.

Screenings and Networking

NYWIFT continues to present industry and membership screenings with filmmaker Q&As, all in a virtual format, and has developed online speed networking opportunities through Zoom to keep our members connected and engaged. We also launched our private Facebook group for daily conversation.

See upcoming programs at nywift.org/events.

2020 Creative Workforce Summit

NYWIFT presented the 2020 Creative Workforce Summit: Documentary Makers, Industry, and Funders in conversation as a four-day virtual event celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage and recognizing the contributions of female documentary filmmakers in the creation of social, cultural, and economic change throughout history, supported by the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice and the National Endowment for the Arts. Keynote speakers included Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Level Forward's Abigail Disney, MTV executive Sheila Nevins, producer Laverne Berry, and Firelight Media's Marcia Smith. The four days of panels and talkbacks were followed by the six-

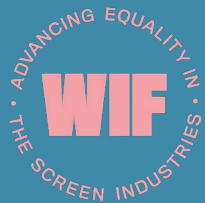
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HIRE HER BACK

Women in Film LA, New York Women in Film & Television, and Women in Film & Television Atlanta are proud to partner on the Hire Her Back Fund. Grants will provide relief to the women and people of marginalized genders whose careers in the screen industries have suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Fund has been organized by Women in Film LA and generously supported by Netflix, ShivHans Pictures CEO Shivani Rawat, and members of the community who have rallied together to offer what they could. It is distributed by The Actors Fund.

Learn more at nywift.org/hire-her-back-fund



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NYWIFT in 2020

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week Women Who Dared Documentary Screening Series, presented in partnership with the International Documentary Association.

Learn more at nywift.org/summit.

Hire Her Back

WIF (Women In Film, Los Angeles), New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT), and Women in Film and Television Atlanta (WIFTA) partnered on the Hire Her Back Fund, to provide grants to members whose careers in the screen industries have been adversely affected by the pandemic. The fund is a key part of the Hire Her Back initiative launched in June, which urges employers to actively combat gender inequality as plans to return to film and television production are developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more at nywift.org/hire-her-back-fund.

NYWIFT Publications

During the pandemic, NYWIFT produced its first-ever publication. *New Women in Film & Television Creative Workforce Summit: Workplace Safety, Diversity & Inclusion, and Pay Equity* is a 68-page publication based on the first annual NYWIFT Summit hosted by the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice. The report summarizes key takeaways from the event and features a suggested action plan for industry leaders going forward. A key takeaway from the summit was the importance of women championing one another, and thus the publication includes inspirational profiles of four women from four different parts of the industry, all of whom relied on strategic networking and community support to carve out their own unique paths to career success.

Learn more at nywift.org/2019-nywift-summit.

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| HBO Documentaries | NYU Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute | |
| HBO Max | | |
| International Documentary Association (IDA) | | |

Special thanks to
Jamie Zelermeyer, Mary Miles, and
Anita Katzen of our Executive Committee,
and general counsel Marsha Brooks
for all of their support this year.

CONGRATULATIONS

2020 MUSE AWARD HONOREES

- Awkwafina
 Rachel Brosnahan
 Rashida Jones
 Jodi Kantor & Megan Twohey
 Alana Mayo
 Gina Prince-Bythewood
 Ali Stroker



NYWIFT Board of Directors



Jamie Zelermyer, President

Jamie Zelermyer has been a New York-based producer and production executive for over 20 years. She most recently produced IFP Week 2019, a signature program of the Independent Filmmaker Project (IFP), and was the program manager of Made In New York: Pilot Competition, a program founded by The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment to tackle gender inclusivity in the television industry. She was the VP, physical production at Focus Features/Rogue Pictures, where she oversaw such movies as *Admission*, *One Day*, *Jane Eyre*, *Sin Nombre*, and *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*.



Christine Bragan, Vice President, Development

As vice president of corporate marketing and communications for AMC Networks, including AMC, BBC America, IFC, Sundance TV, WE tv, and IFC Films, Bragan is responsible for the development and oversight of corporate and industry marketing and public affairs initiatives; trade and promotional activities and events; CEO and executive presentations and appearances; and the management of special cross-divisional projects. Bragan is an active member of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, Women in Cable Telecommunications, and the National Association for Multi-Ethnicity in Communications (NAMIC).



Alex Cirillo, Vice President, Special Events

Alex Cirillo is a producer and the co-founder of Big Vision Empty Wallet, an inclusion-focused incubator that feeds projects into her production company, Big Vision Creative. She develops unexpected content with women, POC, LGBTQ, and differently-abled creators. Her most recent films include *The Light of the Moon* (SXSW 2017 Audience Award Winner), *Lez Bomb* (Gravitas/Netflix 2018), Academy Award-qualifying *One Cambodian Family Please for My Pleasure* (TNT/Refinery29, Sundance 2019), and *Red, White & Wasted* (Tribeca 2019).



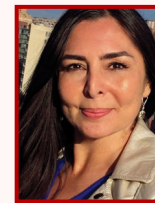
Leslie Fields-Cruz, Vice President, Programming

Leslie Fields-Cruz has been the executive director of BPM (Black Public Media), formerly National Black Programming Consortium, since 2014; she started there in 2001 managing grant-making activities that supported the production and development of documentary programs for PBS. She launched *AfroPoP: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange* in 2008; the series has garnered several awards and is the only national public television series focused solely on stories from the Black experience.



Kathryn O'Kane, Vice President, Communications

Kathryn O'Kane is a director and producer with over 20 years of experience in television and advertising. She is currently the showrunner and director of the Disney+ documentary series *Parenting Without Borders* starring Jessica Alba, which examines how culture shapes parenting around the world. Most recently, O'Kane was the showrunner of the award-winning Netflix series *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat*, and she directed episodes of *Death Row Stories* for CNN. Having started her career supporting democratic initiatives in Latin America, O'Kane first learned the power of messaging while organizing election observations in the Dominican Republic with President Jimmy Carter. She seeks to celebrate different cultures through art and storytelling.

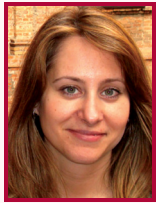


Yvonne Russo, Vice President, Membership

Yvonne Russo is an award-winning producer, director, and writer of film and television specializing in inspirational Indigenous and cross-cultural stories. Recent credits include *Woman Walks Ahead*; the HBO mini-series *Lewis and Clark*; *Viva Verdi!*; and *Rescuers: Heroes of the Holocaust*. She is also a Sundance Institute Lab Fellow and Tribeca All Access Program Fellow, and is on the board of The Language Conservancy, which works to revitalize endangered languages. Russo is a member of the Sicangu Lakota Tribal Nation.


Anita Katzen, Treasurer

Anita Katzen is a tax partner in Schulman Lobel LLP. She works closely with more than 100 entertainers in all aspects of their business operations. Her services range from tax planning and cash management to corporate, partnership, individual, and estate taxation services. She has successfully represented clients at tax audits on federal, state, and local tax issues. She is a member of the AICPA, NY State Society of CPAs (and its Entertainment, Art, and Sports Committee), and on the board of The Film Shop.


Maria C. Miles, Secretary

Maria C. Miles is the founding partner of an entertainment law firm with offices in New York. Miles' practice focuses on all areas of entertainment law, including, film (narrative and documentary), music, publishing, fashion, and new media. Miles has worked with award-winning producers, directors, writers, actors, television hosts, multi-platinum recording artists, and corporations in the fashion and sports industries related to their entertainment matters.



Sirad Balducci has worked over 25 years as an independent producer/director based in New York City and has worked with notable filmmakers such as Julian Schnabel, Julien Temple, Peter Masterson, Nick Cassavetes, director Peter Berg, and Michael Cuesta among many others. Producing credits include the *Into Character* series for AMC, Peter Berg's Disney/Imagine

Television series *Wonderland* for ABC, and feature films *Roadie* (directed by Michael Cuesta), *Are You Joking?*, and *The Man on Her Mind*. She line produced/co-produced *Anamorph*, *A Little Help*, *Gun Hill Road*, *The Longest Week*, and *Jack of the Red Hearts*, among others.



Kerry Fulton is co-founder of Evenfield Entertainment, which puts women at the creative and decision-making center. The company finances and executive produces commercial movies for underserved diverse global audiences. Fulton previously produced the award-winning films 3D animated *Justin and the Knights of Valor* and documentary *Ana and I*. She is a member of the Producers Guild of America, BAFTA, and WIA. Fulton holds

a B.F.A. in film and TV from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts and an E.M.B.A. from the NYU Stern School of Business.



Christina Kiely has been producing and directing documentaries for over 23 years. Most recently she wrote and produced ABC News' first digital documentary series, *A Murder on Orchard Street*, and co-produced the accompanying podcast to the series. She also produced for the series *In the Jury Room* and the weekly news magazine *Primetime Mondays*, and she was nomi-

nated for an Emmy for her work on the series *NYPD 24/7*. Outside of ABC, Kiely has produced and directed numerous programs, including the A&E *Biography of Yo-Yo Ma*, 12 hours of the TLC series *Code Blue: New Orleans*, the PBS weekly news magazine *Rights & Wrongs: Human Rights Television*.



Amenya Makuku is an independent producer and the head of development for Wilderness Films, with previous experience at Edward Norton's Class 5 Films (*Thanks for Sharing*) and FilmNation Entertainment (*Room*, *Arrival*). Her in-depth development background is reinforced by an education in production legal, acquisitions and international pre-sales. Makuku co-

produced Josephine Decker's Sundance smash *Madeline's Madeline* and produced the TV-length pilot for the web-series *Addie & Addy*.



Gretchen McGowan is an award-winning producer and the head of production for Goldcrest Features in New York City, where she oversees titles such as *Carol*, *Mojave*, *Slumber*, *Restrepo*, *Carrie Pilby*, and *Danger*, *Close*. While head of production with Mark Cuban's HDNet Films, Blow Up Pictures, and Open City Films she supervised over 25 features, including *Redacted*,

Enron, *Broken English*, *Bubble*, *Lovely and Amazing*, and *Coffee and Cigarettes*. She line produced *The Dancemaker*, *Buffalo '66*, *Two Girls and a Guy*, *American Psycho*, and *Heavy*.



Zenaida Mendez is the director of the Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN) El Barrio Firehouse Community Media Center and has over 20 years of experience working on issues affecting women and African descendant people. She has spoken about the role of the media in perpetuating violence against women and fueling negative stereotypes, electoral

politics, and parenting and immigration issues. Mendez has over 10 years of experience working as a public servant: eight years working as

a public servant during the David N. Dinkins administrations as Manhattan borough president and New York City mayor, and almost five years at the federal level working for Congressman Charles B. Rangel.



Flo Mitchell-Brown brings over 20 years of entertainment industry leadership, management, and production experience to her role as executive producer and co-founder of Give Film. In recent months, Mitchell-Brown executive produced two short films entitled *The Unstoppable* and *Play Dead*, and she is currently the head of industry engagement at ER Production

Solutions, the division of Extreme Reach that provides payroll, accounting, and labor relations for production casts and crews across the entertainment industry.



Joyce Pierpoline is an independent film producer and founder of Pierpoline Films, best known for producing controversial, character-driven narratives that tackle issues of gender and sexuality. Her most recent film, *The Transfiguration*, premiered in Un Certain Regard-Cannes Film Festival, other films include Sundance award-winning *Teeth*, *Happy Tears*, *Angelica*, and *In*

the *Company of Men*. She serves on the board of BAFTA-NY, where she is co-chair of the film and television committee. She is a member of the European Producers Club, the European Film Academy, and the Producers Guild of America, where she was founding co-chair of the Women's Impact Network.



Rachel Watanabe-Batton is a producer, independent media strategist, and president of Contradiction and Struggle, an American production and consulting company dedicated to telling authentic stories that reframe historical and cultural understanding while building robust distribution pathways by connecting film, television, and digital creators with capital, causes, and

global audiences. Her development slate includes two projects with legendary director Julie Dash. Watanabe-Batton serves on the board of representatives of the Producers Guild of America East as a member-at-large, and board of directors of Manhattan Neighborhood Network (chair) and Women Independent Producers (co-founder).



S. Casper Wong is a writer, director, and producer. Her documentary feature, *The LuLu Sessions*, has won 10 awards and nominations and was on PBS' *America ReFramed* series, and she received a humanitarian award from the SASS Foundation along with Governor Andrew Cuomo. Since 2005 she has worked on productions in China and the U.S., and she represented

Roger Corman in his first co-productions, working with two Chinese studios and a CGI team. Prior to receiving her M.F.A. in film directing from NYU, she was senior attorney for IBM general counsel in Silicon Valley and lead counsel for diversity.



Kuye Youngblood is an Emmy award-winning producer with experience in scripted and documentary series. She is currently the head of development and production at BRIC TV. Her responsibilities include creative development of new series, including *The Great Pretender*, and managing a team of dynamic media makers. Her EP work has screened at Tribeca

Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, New Voices in Black Cinema, Hot Docs, American Black Film Festival, and Bentonville Film Festival. Original series include *The Show About the Show*, *Brooklynification*, *Dinette*, and *All Hail Beth*. She's a speaker at SXSW and SeriesFest and a producer/moderator for IFP panels.



Legal Counsel **Marsha S. Brooks, Esq.** is a partner in the New York City law firm of Brooks & Distler. She has specialized in the areas of entertainment and intellectual property law for over 25 years. Brooks represents producers, writers, directors, rights owners, and for-profit and not-for-profit institutions in the fields of legitimate theater, motion picture, television, and new media all over the world. She is general counsel for the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and NYWIFT.

Special Thanks

to **Loreen Arbus** for providing the Loreen Arbus Disability Awareness Grant, which is given to a woman filmmaker for completion of a film on physical or developmental disability issues, and to **Michele Spitz** for the Woman of Her Word Audio Description Grant, which provides audio description for the blind, including voice and production services, for the same project.

NYWIFT Founders

On July 13, 1977, New York producer and director Lenore DeKoven and *The Hollywood Reporter* bureau chief Morna Murphy Martell called a meeting of 25 women colleagues at a Manhattan apartment, including soon-to-be NYWIFT Board President Marilyn Casselman, to discuss forming an organization for women in the film industry. And then the lights went out across New York City. While the creation of NYWIFT did not cause the 1977 New York City Blackout, those women did start a power surge that has continued for over 40 years.

All three women have continued to be vibrant advocates for women in the entertainment community. Through the 1980s, Martell covered the-



Left, Marilyn Casselman;
Center, Lenore DeKoven;
Right, Morna Murphy
Martell

ater for *The Hollywood Reporter*. Today, her reviews can be found in her monthly column for the senior newspaper *Not Born Yesterday* and her blog: theatrespokenhere. Her one-woman show *Harriet Tubman Herself*, starring NYWIFT member Christine Dixon, is in its 10th year touring the East Coast.

DeKoven's career as director, producer, and educator has spanned both East and West Coasts and includes theater, film, and television. She has held executive positions at Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, the N.Y. Shakespeare Festival, Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre, the National Repertory Theatre, and Roundabout Theatre Company in New York and was chairperson of the board of Theatre West, L.A.

In addition to leading NYWIFT during its early years, Casselman worked in international sales and marketing for Warner Communications, RPTA London, Impact Films, and American Documentary Films. She is also a theater and film producer, writer, and director. Her published works include *Talking the Walk: The Grassroots Language of Feminism*. Currently, she is working on a two-volume novel based on witchcraft set in England and France circa 1700.

A special heartfelt thank you to our founders. The struggle for pay equity, diversity and inclusion, and safe work environments continues....

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NYWIFT Staff



Cynthia López, Executive Director
clopez@nywift.org

Cynthia Lopez is the Executive Director of New York Women in Film & Television, 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. Notable partnerships include: *The New York Times*, Reuters, Al-Jazeera Network, Discovery Communications, The Moth, Story Corps, Harpo Studios and *ABC News*, *NIGHTLINE with Ted Koppel*. López is a founding member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP), and is proud to have spent her career collaborating with independent filmmakers across all portions of the film and television industry. She served on the Board of Trustees for the Paley Center, NYC & Company, Museum of the Moving Image and the Tribeca Film Institute Latin America Fund Advisory Board. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Latino Public Broadcasting, Manhattan Neighborhood Network and Hunter College IMA Program.



Katie Chambers, Community Engagement Director
kchambers@nywift.org

Katie Chambers manages both Communications and Membership, and has received awards for her work at NYWIFT from the New York Society of Association Executives and Association TRENDS. Prior to joining the NYWIFT team, Chambers was a talent agent in the youth and young adult theatrical division at Abrams Artists Agency.



Easmanie Michel,
Finance and Special Projects Associate
emichel@nywift.org

Easmanie Michel has worked in the film and television industry since 2004. Her credits include *Transporter*, *Hoot*, *Miami Vice*, *Miami Ink*, and *Burn Notice*. She is currently producing *Caroline's Wedding*, a feature film she co-wrote. The script was a finalist for New York University Fusion Film Festival, selected to participate in the Women at Sundance Financing and Strategy Intensive, and won the American Zoetrope Screenplay Competition grand prize. The film has also received a New York Council on the Arts individual artist grant. She is currently completing a certificate in financial accounting at New York University, from which she also received a master's degree in cinema studies.



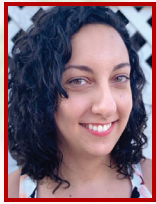
Barbara Vásconez, Program Manager
bvasconez@nywift.org

Barbara Vásconez has worked for a variety of film festivals, including the Tribeca, Rooftop Films, Hampsons International, Montclair, Mill Valley, DOC NYC, and Nantucket. Before joining NYWIFT, she held the position of general manager at the Quad Cinema. She also programs panels and creates unique community engagement opportunities for the New York Latino Film Festival and public screenings for Montclair Film Festival. Most recently, she launched and founded the Ville Film Festival in Somerville, New Jersey. Vásconez has a degree in film and video production from the School of Visual Arts in New York City.



Rashiek Smart, Executive Assistant
rsmart@nywift.org

Rashiek Smart worked in production for the Emmy nominated show *Here and Now* hosted by Eyewitness News Anchor Sandra Bookman. She also was an award-winning video journalist for the Verizon Fios 1 show *My Long Island TV*, covering newsworthy stories. Smart graduated from SUNY College at Old Westbury with a B.A. in communications and mass media.



Sara Tandoi, Membership Assistant
membership@nywift.org

Sara Tandoi is a filmmaker, production assistant, and aspiring TV writer. She has an extensive background in production, having worked on shows such as *Manifest* (NBC), *Gotham* (Fox), and *Dietland* (AMC). Tandoi graduated from Brooklyn College with a B.A.

in film production.



Maud Kersnowski-Sachs,
Senior Editorial and Development Consultant
maud@nywift.org

Maud Kersnowski-Sachs has led publications for the Sundance Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF). She covers arts, entertainment, and media for publications from *Metropolis Magazine* to *IndieWIRE*, where she was the West Coast editor. She has an M.A. in cultural reporting and criticism from NYU School of Journalism and a B.A. in women's studies from Bard College, where she is a member of the board of governors.

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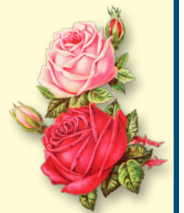
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*never wavering
as an advocate for equality.*

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keep its mission strong.*

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is proud to work with NYWIFT
to celebrate and support
women in film, television
and digital media.



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