

# NYWIFT || New York Women in Film & Television

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## **NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION (NYWIFT) ANNOUNCES 2020 New York Women in Film and Television Creative Workforce Summit: Documentary Makers, Industry and Funders in Conversation**

Virtual Summit to Take Place October 20-23, 2020

Digital copies of publication based on the first annual NYWIFT Summit released

**NEW YORK, NY – October 6, 2020** – New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) announced the dates and theme for their second annual **New York Women in Film & Television Creative Workforce Summit: Documentary Makers, Industry, and Funders in Conversation**, set to take place virtually October 20-23, 2020. The annual event, consisting of keynote speakers, panels, and film screenings, aims to bring together some of the most unique and diverse voices of women working in the entertainment industry to establish forward-moving strategies to create change and mobilize support and leadership for the future. The NYWIFT Summit takes place with support provided by the Ford Foundation and the NEA Foundation as well as a curated film screening and panel series produced in partnership with International Documentary Association.

NYWIFT announced that confirmed keynote speakers for this year's summit include: **Laverne Berry** (Past NYWIFT President, Producer and Central Protagonist in "Capturing the Flag"), **Abigail E. Disney** (Filmmaker and Activist, Level Forward and Fork Films), **Sheila Nevins**, (Executive Producer, MTV Networks), **Marcia Smith** (President & Co-Founder, Firelight Media) with a welcome address from **Maria Torres-Springer**, Vice President of US Programs, Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice.

This year the summit will be two-fold: first, celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment granting women the right to vote. Set just a few weeks prior to the U.S. election, the event will look at how to inform, update, and galvanize women voters about the history in securing the right to vote and highlight women in politics that have pushed for the women's rights and for the Equal Rights Amendment.

The summit will also recognize the contributions made by female documentary filmmakers and their efforts to create social, cultural and economic change in history, specifically addressing the opportunities and challenges filmmakers are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting financial crisis as well as the Black Lives Matter Movement. Additional programming including panels and participants will be announced in the coming weeks.

The prestigious group of panelists participating in this year's summit include **Lisa Cortes & Liz Garbus** ("All In: The Fight for Democracy"), **Marjan Safinia** ("And She Could Be Next"), **Dawn Porter** (John Lewis: Good Trouble), **Shalini Kantayya** ("Coded Bias"), **Maria Finitzo** ("The Dilemma of Desire"), **Yvonne Russo** ("Untitled Annie Mae Aquash Documentary"), and **Nadia Hallgren** ("Becoming").

“Now more than ever women in the entertainment industry need to support each other as the industry faces critical hurdles in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, financial crisis and the thriving Black Lives Matter Movement. We are energized to host this summit in spite of our current circumstances to continue to provide a collaborative platform that inspires content development,” said **NYWIFT Executive Director Cynthia Lopez**. “The role of female documentary filmmakers over the course of history and social conversation is incredibly noteworthy and we look forward to examining this topic in detail set against backdrop of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, a historic moment for women, and lacing together both discussions together at the summit.”

“Since all disciplines above and below the line are represented at NYWIFT, organizing a Summit that brings together many different perspectives to share ideas and best practices became a crucial undertaking. Because of its diversity, NYWIFT is the perfect incubator of ideas and solutions to monumental issues facing our industry today,” said **NYWIFT Board Member Kathryn O’Kane, VP of Advocacy**. “Particularly now, during a global pandemic, following a groundbreaking social justice movement, and on the eve of a monumental U.S. election, the role of documentary makers as truth-tellers and historians is critical. We are excited to come together to celebrate their work and explore the future of this business and art form.”

New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) is also releasing digital advance copies of *New Women in Film & Television Creative Workforce Summit: Workplace Safety, Diversity & Inclusion, and Pay Equity*, a 68-page publication based on the first annual NYWIFT Summit by the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice. The inaugural NYWIFT advocacy summit in 2019 addressed vital issues surrounding gender and pay gap, diversity/inclusion and sexual harassment, and had over 175 film and television industry stakeholders in attendance. The publication, which was supported by the Ford Foundation, serves as a concise summary of the lessons learned, challenges identified, and targeted next steps from the summit. Given the radical shift in the industry in wake of COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement, the publication also acknowledges the new opportunities for inclusion and potential challenges to overcome as the entertainment business prepares for a massive re-hiring as production resumes.

This is NYWIFT’s first official publication in the organization’s 43-year history. In addition to highlights from each of the event’s panels, the briefing also features a suggested action plan for industry leaders going forward.

“NYWIFT is an innovator in bringing women in the film and television industry together to have incredibly important and candid conversations. Talking about workplace harassment, pay inequity, diversity and inclusion through the conduit of this summit is key to changing the dynamic and making progress. This inspires women to stand united and demand a new normal. We are fortunate that we have a Governor in New York State who is proactive when it comes to advancing these issues, and together, with all of you, we will write a script that changes history. I congratulate NYWIFT on its first official publication and for making this valuable resource available as a tool for all women,” said **New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon**.

"We are proud to support the NYWIFT Creative Workforce Summit and deeply value the light their research shines on the state of the industry at large. Bringing women together for honest conversations about pay disparities, workplace harassment, and diversity is a critical step towards creating a media and entertainment sector that is fully inclusive and where women content makers, actors, and crew are truly able to thrive," said **Maria Torres-Springer, vice president for U.S. Programs at the Ford Foundation**.

NYWIFT has continued to support the industry with more than 50 various digital programs during the pandemic including the introduction of NYWIFT Talks, which continues conversations with industry leaders about the impact of COVID-19 on the media and entertainment space. In addition to other popular NYWIFT programs including the NYWIFT Designing Women Awards and the NYWIFT Muse Awards, the summit is an annual event for the organization. Additional information on the summit, including all panels and participants as well as their upcoming virtual programming can all be found on the [NYWIFT website](#).

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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 more than 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](http://www.NYWIFT.org)

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