



The Writers Lab US Launches in the UK & Ireland, bringing the Only Virtual Script Development Programme for Women Over 40

Cate Blanchett's Dirty Films comes on board as supporters for the UK & I venture, joining US Lab supporters Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman and Oprah Winfrey

London, UK – March 11, 2021 – **The Writers Lab** (TWL) is delighted to announce the launch of **The Writers Lab UK & Ireland** (TWL UK & I) with the first script development programme of its kind for women over 40, in partnership with **Untamed Stories** and supported by **Dirty Films**, the independent film and television production company headed by **Cate Blanchett, Andrew Upton** and **Coco Francini** with development producer **Georgie Pym**, and in association with **Birds' Eye View**. Submissions will open from 1-20 April 2021. Learn more and apply at <http://thewriterslab.nyc/uk-lab/>

TWL UK & I will be produced with UK Partner **Untamed Stories**, the creative production hub helmed by development producers **Julia Berg** and **Ruth Spencer**; in association with **Birds' Eye View**, the not-for-profit which champions the female perspective in film and headed by **Mia Bays**. The Lab is supported by **Dirty Films**, as well as **Screen Scotland, Screen Skills Ireland, Northern Ireland Screen** and **Ffilm Cymru Wales & BFI NETWORK with funding from the National Lottery**. The US programme, produced by co-founders **Elizabeth Kaiden** and **Nitza Wilon** and **New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT)**, is supported by **Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman, and Oprah Winfrey**.

The Writers Lab, the only programme devoted exclusively to script development for woman-identifying writers over 40, brings the co-founders of its pioneering Lab to writers in the UK and Ireland with a new virtual programme held **10-13 June 2021**, with Post-Lab virtual mentoring sessions in the months following. Submissions of both Features and Pilots (both 1-hour and ½-hour) will be accepted for consideration. Up to 12 writers will be selected to participate in an opportunity for unique and emerging voices reflecting the diversity of the populations across Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Writers selected for the Lab will work one-on-one and in group sessions with acclaimed screen industry leaders to develop their scripts and their craft, and to build tools and strategies to achieve success. Past TWL US Mentors have included: **Anne Carey** (*Can You Ever Forgive Me?*), **Frida Torresblanco** (*Pan's Labyrinth*) and **Robin Swicord** (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*).

Founded in 2015 in New York, **The Writers Lab US** in October, 2020, welcomed its sixth and most inclusive class to date, with half of selected participants identifying as historically underrepresented, and half of the projects identified as genre. With demand for streaming content from diverse voices skyrocketing globally, the Lab expands in 2021 to include pilot scripts as well as narrative features to further TWL's mission of amplifying the oft-unheard voices of women over 40.

Alumni have gained recognition post-Lab: Eight have landed writer-for-hire jobs; seven signed with managers or agents; two have won The Academy Nicholl Fellowship; four TWL US projects have been optioned or moved into production, and the Lab will see the emergence of its first completed project in 2021, Alyson Richards' horror film *The Retreat*.

Cate Blanchett, Andrew Upton & Coco Francini, DIRTY FILMS said: *"The incredible work that The Writers Lab are doing in providing a platform for underrepresented creative voices resonates deeply with all of us at Dirty Films, so we jumped at the opportunity to support their expansion to the UK and Ireland. We're excited to see the results of this year's lab and we look forward to working with Untamed Stories, NYWIFT and The Writers Lab to discover some of the amazing untapped talent in this region."*

Elizabeth Kaiden, TWL co-founder said: *"Julia and Ruth of Untamed Stories are an astounding force whose vision and energy is infectious. We're thrilled to be working with them and look forward to welcoming this new cohort of writers into our community of exceptional, experienced and diverse alumni."*

Mia Bays, Director At Large, Birds' Eye View said: *"We are delighted to be a part of The Writers Lab UK & IRELAND 2021 and the mission to amplify the oft-unheard voices of women over 40 - addressing ageism and sexism in the screen industry - an industry that, not surprisingly, overlooks the many benefits to being an older writer - such as more life experience and a greater understanding of human motivation. We cannot wait to unite with this strong network of collaborators and lift up the talent we know are out there and can thrive in these encouraging conditions."*

Cynthia Lopez, NYWIFT Executive Director said: *"New York Women in Film & Television is excited for this groundbreaking Signature Program to reach women in the UK & Ireland. In recent years, and especially during COVID-19, it's clear that women creatives in film and television can connect across geographic divides to draw strength and power from each other and build community that transcends location."*

Submissions will open from **1-20 April, 2021**. Find all details and apply at <http://thewriterslab.nyc/uk-lab/>

For further information and interviews please contact:

ARPR, Alex Rowley – alex.rowley@ar-pr.co.uk

Stills available: <https://bit.ly/2PU6JiH>

ABOUT THE WRITERS LAB UK & IRELAND

Created by TWL co-founders Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitza Wilon with Julia Berg and Ruth Spencer of Untamed Stories, and developed with support from New York Women in Film & Television, The Writers Lab UK & Ireland is dedicated to developing narrative scripted content by diverse women over the age of 40 in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. We are industry veterans who elevate the work of women screenwriters in their prime through mentorship, advocacy and exposure.

For more information visit thewriterslab.nyc.

Follow at @The_Writers_Lab

ABOUT DIRTY FILMS:

Dirty Films is an independent film and television production company, whose partners are Cate Blanchett, Andrew Upton and Coco Francini. Upcoming films in development include Christos Nikou's English-language feature debut FINGERNAILS, in which Carey Mulligan is attached to star; and the Bert & Bertie-helmed QUEEN BITCH AND THE HIGH HORSE with New Republic

Pictures. Most recently, Dirty Films executive produced Nikou's "APPLES," which has since been named one of the year's Best International Films by the National Board of Review. Blanchett and Francini also produced the 10-time EMMY-nominated MRS AMERICA, which was named one of 2020's Best Television Shows by the American Film Institute. Dirty Films produced the 13-time AACTA-winning series STATELESS, which Blanchett also co-created. Other film credits include TRUTH, CAROL, LITTLE FISH and THE TURNING. Dirty Films has a first-look film deal with New Republic Pictures and a first-look television deal with FX.

ABOUT UNTAMED STORIES

Founded by Julia Berg, now partnered with Ruth Spencer. Untamed Stories is a film/TV development hub for new voices that nurtures projects by underrepresented talent and ensures an exciting pathway for greater access to the industry. The company founders are also producing content with top tier writers, directors and financiers including Emily Ballou (*Humans*, *Taboo*) Stuart Page (*Total Control*) and Maven Pictures (*American Honey*).

For more information visit www.untamedstories.com

Follow @UntamedStories (twitter) / @UntamedStoriesJR (Facebook/instagram)

ABOUT BIRDS' EYE VIEW FILM (BEV):

Now in their 18th year, Birds' Eye View continues to support women of all ages working in film through advocacy, investment, mentoring and events. Their British Film Institute funded RECLAIM THE FRAME mission raises awareness around new and classic films by women online and in cinemas (when they're open!) - spotlighting many remarkable female stories and important social, cultural and ethical issues - ranging from women's art and literature to indigenous and disability rights to dementia and AI.

[Logos](#)/Language - TWL, NYWIFT, Dirty Films, Untamed Stories, BEV, Screen Scotland, Screen Skills Ireland, Northern Ireland Screen, Ffilm Cymru Wales & BFI NETWORK with funding from the National Lottery

