

# NYWIFT || New York Women in Film & Television

**EMBARGOED FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 2nd at 11:30AM ET, PLEASE**

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## **THE WRITERS LAB for WOMEN SCREENWRITERS OVER 40 EXPANDS TO 16 PARTICIPANTS FOR 7<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT LAB**

**For the first time ever, the Lab is open to episodic pilots.**

**Women are Writing: Submissions are up 30%**

**New York, NY – August 1, 2021** – The Writers Lab is pleased to announce an expanded class of 16 participants for 2021 for its script development lab for women writers over 40. (see list below). Accepting pilots as well as features for the first time since launching in 2015, The Writers Lab will build a rich virtual experience for 9 feature writers and 7 pilot writers in 2021, its seventh year. Due to COVID-19, this fall's lab will be virtual.

The only lab in the world devoted exclusively to script development for women writers over the age of 40, The Writers Lab is produced by co-founders **Elizabeth Kaiden** and **Nitza Wilon** and **New York Women in Film & Television**, and supported by **Meryl Streep**, **Nicole Kidman**, **Oprah Winfrey** and the **Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation**.

Mentors and Guest Speakers confirmed for the 2021 lab include **Priya Amritraj** (*Hyde Park Entertainment*), **Susan Cartsonis** (*What Women Want*), **Amy Fox** (*The Connors*), **Pamela Gray** (*A Walk on the Moon*), **Lisa Jones** (*Disappearing Acts*), **Jennifer Levine** (*Untitled Entertainment*), **Mary Jane Skalski** (*Hello I Must Be Going*), **Robin Swicord** (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*), **Frida Torresblanco** (*Pan's Labyrinth*), **Pat Verducci** (*True Crime*), **Tracey Scott Wilson** (*The Americans*), **Jamie Zelermeyer** (*NYWIFT Board President and former Focus Features VP*).

The 2021 Lab will focus its programming on providing tools and strategies for talented writers to develop their projects and navigate the ever-shifting landscape of professional opportunities. Additionally in 2021, the Lab expands support for its alumni and its entire pool of applicants, offering more than \$5K in rewards to applicants who placed, and augmenting its online resources and virtual programming with additional podcasts and video recordings. Partners include the Writers Guild of America, East, The Black List, Falco

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Ink, Film Fatales, Filmarket Hub, Final Draft, Population Media Center, Roadmap Writers, and Untamed Stories.

Amidst the global pandemic, submissions to The Writers Lab for women over 40 went up by 30%. Submissions of genre scripts, particularly sci-fi and horror, were higher this year, as well as stories focused on politics, scientific innovation, sex work and human trafficking, and religion. Clearly, women writers over 40 have a wide range of rich and radical stories to tell.

*"We were astounded by the submissions, which are stronger every year - not just the increased volume, which tells us that women have been writing in lockdown, but also the depth and breadth of their creativity in cinematically depicting today's twisted, glorious world,"* said **The Writers Lab co-founder Elizabeth Kaiden.**

*"Even during times of crisis, unique opportunities do exist,"* said **New York Women in Film & Television Executive Director Cynthia Lopez.** *"Shaped by the current civil rights movement, media companies and creative talent are radically reimagining how to create and distribute work. The Writers Lab, as always, is adapting to trends and the demands of the industry. We are thrilled that, even during Pandemic 2.0, women writers, directors and showrunners will be working together to support diverse creative talent."*

From **Lisa Caruso, Head of U.S. Content for Population Media Center:** *"We are delighted to offer support for Danielle Autumn Stratton's 'The Rez,' which deftly and bravely addresses the serious issue of missing indigenous women, and which aligns with our organization's mission to tell diverse stories supporting female empowerment and equality."*

**The 16 participants of The Writers Lab 2021 are:**

## **FEATURES**

**Katherine Andrews & Virginia Abramovich, *Lil (sci-fi)***

**Tracey Bradley, *Yardbird (drama)***

**Wilandrea Blair, *Lolo (comedy)***

**Susan Chiu, *Agree to Disagree (comedy)***

**Joy Goodwin, *Over It (action)***

**Krystyna Łoboda, *Gig (sci-fi)***

**Tasha Moore, *Man Called Buffalo (drama)***

**Monika Moreno-Lapp, *Whirlwind (drama)***

**Irina Rodriguez, *The Countess (historical)***

## **ONE-HOUR PILOTS**

**Jennifer Dunn, *Birdsong (drama)***

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**Margaux Froley**, *Kat and Mouse (drama)*

**Kimberlea Kressal**, *Scorched Earth (drama)*

**Amanda Parham**, *Signals (sci-fi)*

**Danielle Autumn Stratton**, *The Rez (drama)* - Population Media Center Award Recipient

## HALF-HOUR PILOTS

**Wendy Dann**, *The Jury (drama)*

**Desdemona Chiang**, *Made in USA (drama)*

The Writers Lab is putting together an expanded roster of influential, experienced filmmakers to mentor participants in development sessions, panels, and story-breaking workshops. **Mentors confirmed for 2021 include:**

- **Priya Amritraj** (*Hyde Park Entertainment*)
- **Susan Cartsonis** (*What Women Want, Where the Heart Is, The Duff, Carrie Pilby*)
- **Amy Fox** (*The Connors, Equity*)
- **Pamela Gray** (*A Walk on the Moon, Music of the Heart, Conviction*)
- **Lisa Jones** (*Disappearing Acts, The Wedding*)
- **Jennifer Levine** (*Untitled Entertainment*)
- **Mary Jane Skalski** (*Hello I Must Be Going, The Visitor, The Station Agent*)
- **Robin Swicord** (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, Memoirs of a Geisha*)
- **Frida Torresblanco** (*Pan's Labyrinth, Disobedience*)
- **Pat Verducci** (*Disney/Pixar, True Crime, Smoked*)
- **Tracey Scott Wilson** (*The Americans, Respect*)
- **Jamie Zelermeyer** (*Focus Features, Boys Don't Cry, Before/During/After*)

**Partners** include the **Writers Guild of America, East, The Black List, Falco Ink, Film Fatales, Filmarket Hub, Population Media Center, Roadmap Writers** and **Untamed Stories**. A special thank you to **Final Draft** for their product contribution.

## ABOUT THE WRITERS LAB

Co-Founded by Elizabeth Kaiden and Nitzia Wilon with Kyle Ann Stokes, and produced with New York Women in Film & Television, The Writers Lab is dedicated to developing narrative scripted content written by diverse women over the age of 40. With industry veterans, the Lab elevates the work of women screenwriters in their prime through mentorship, advocacy and exposure. Alumni have been staffed in writers rooms, signed with managers and agents, landed deals and moved their scripts into production. In addition to the flagship US Lab, TWL now produces a Lab for women writers over 40 in the UK & Ireland.

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## **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](http://www.nywift.org).**

**Follow on all social platforms @NYWIFT / #NYWIFT**

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