



2016 Panelist Biographies

Words to “Action”!

As of 11/02/2016



Marilyn R Atlas is a Talent/Literary Manager and Producer. Among her credits as film producer are REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES for HBO, which won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival, A CERTAIN DESIRE, and ECHOES, which won the Gold Award at the Texas International Film Festival. She produced THE CHOKING GAME for Lifetime, based on a YA book. She was involved in several writers' debut books for HarperCollins, Grand Central Publishing, and Source Books. Marilyn is a member of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers. She has long been committed to projects that celebrate diversity. She speaks at colleges, film festivals, and industry events on creating three-dimensional, non-stereotypical characters. She is the co-author of a relationship-based, screenwriting guide called *Dating Your Character*, about an organic approach to character creation for Stairway Press. She is also featured in the book *Write Now!* from Penguin/Tarcher.



Monica Lee Bellais is an award winning screenwriter / producer and a world-class media expert with considerable know-how that blends experiences in Hollywood, Washington, DC and international markets. Monica has worked at Lightstorm Entertainment, DreamWorks, Warner Bros. Records, Discovery Communications, Smithsonian Networks, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and TeleProductions International (TPI). She is a Co-Executive Producer on the feature film WAKEFIELD and a producer on BENNIE'S starring Ed Asner, Joe Estevez and Cathy Moriarty. As an Executive Producer at TPI she cultivated a worldwide network of multimedia professionals, leveraged knowledge of local cultures to develop authentic international programming, and conducted international business development in Egypt, Pakistan,

Lebanon, France, Monaco, Italy and Thailand. She managed the development and production in the USA and United Arab Emirates in non-fiction programming initiatives for broadcast via film, television, and the web for audiences in the Middle East, Europe, North Africa and Asia. After serving as a WIFV board member, Monica now serves on the WIFV Advisory Committee. She is also the founder and creator of Spotlight on Screenwriters, sponsored by WIFV, the DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, & Entertainment, the Maryland Film Office, and the Virginia Film Office. Her professional memberships include the PGA, the WGA, SAG-AFTRA, NATAS - Documentary Programming Peer Group, and The National Press Club.



Arla Bowers won a Cine Golden Eagle award for her short narrative comedy FACING THE FIRST. She earned screen credit for the direct-to-video feature THE LOST STALLION. Her short script TWENTY QUESTIONS was highlighted at the International Family Film Festival in Los Angeles and was purchased by Studio Kinate. Arla has received scriptwriting honors in numerous competitions, including the Academy Nicholl Fellowship and the Maryland Independent Artist Award. She regularly serves as a judge for The Scriptwriter Network's Hollywood Outreach Program and as a speaker at WIFV's ScriptDC. She produced the cable-aired MARY PICKFORD'S GIFT TO A NEW GENERATION and created the three-year moving image middle school curriculum "Lights, Camera, Literacy!" She is a member of the Alliance of

Women Directors, as well as the Dramatists Guild, and is represented by a major independent literary agent in Los Angeles. Her work is highlighted in the 2014 and 2015 SPOTLIGHT ON SCREENWRITERS catalogues and she was chosen as one of just five writers to attend The Black List's 2015 NYC Mini-Lab.



Maryanne Culpepper is an award-winning writer/filmmaker with 20+ years experience in developing and delivering high-profile specials and series for US and international broadcasters and digital platforms. She lead production and development at National Geographic Television, and recently launched her own company, Graffiti Works, specializing in story-driven non-fiction projects for broadcast, digital and web-based applications. She is now the Executive Director for the Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital.



Joan Darling was the first woman nominated for an Emmy® for directing. She was nominated four times winning both the Emmy® and the DGA Award. She is considered the first woman director of the modern age. She has lent her talents as both a director and actress. In the early 1970s, Joan got an acting role as a recurring character in the television series OWEN MARSHALL, COUNSELOR AT LAW. In her early directorial career, Joan directed the pilot and many other episodes in the first season of the hit TV series MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN. She also directed episodes of M.A.S.H., RICH MAN, POOR MAN, MAGNUM PI, among others. She directed the "Chuckles Bites the Dust" episode of THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW, which was named "the number one TV episode of all time" by *TV Guide*. *The New York Times* named it "the funniest episode ever on TV". Her first film, FIRST LOVE, was released in 1977, and was named one of the year's ten best by CBS. Joan created the Directing the Actor workshop for the Sundance institute and has taught directing at the Sundance Lab for twenty years.



Brian A. Frankel is a business, entertainment, and intellectual property attorney based in Washington D.C. Brian stays active and engaged in the creative community. Brian serves on the Board of Directors for and as the Education Chairman of Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts, serves as the Executive Director of D.C. Filmmakers and D.C Media Makers, and is the Festival Director for the Wheaton Film festival. Brian is an award-winning independent filmmaker. He has produced and/or directed music videos, films, television shows, commercials, and multi-media projects. Brian's past video clients include MTV, Spike TV, Motorola, M Audio, Def Jam South Records, the Merchant Marines, and the Independent Feature Project. Brian was honored as a Kodak Emerging Filmmaker.



Phylis Geller is a veteran award-winning producer/director and media executive. She is currently President of Norman Star Media in Washington, DC. Geller has served as Senior Vice President of production at three major PBS producing stations: WETA, Washington, DC; KCET/Hollywood; and Maryland Public Television. Ms. Geller is a past-president of WIF/Los Angeles and a past-chair of the WIF Foundation, in which role she founded the WIFF Film Finishing Fund. In her executive positions, she has overseen development and distribution of programs in all genres: drama, history, science, performance and children's programs. Earlier in her career, she produced many dramas for the PBS series THEATER IN AMERICA and AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE. Other projects include: Writer/Producer/Director, COAL COUNTRY (Discovery);

Executive producer, DEPRESSION: Out of the Shadows (PBS); Writer/producer, THE APPALACHIANS (3-part series, PBS); Writer/producer/director, COSMIC JOURNEY: The Voyager Interstellar Mission and Message (A&E) (nominated, national Emmy, Best Science Documentary); Executive producer and co-writer, Korean War Stories, (PBS) (winner, national Emmy, Best Historical Documentary); Executive producer and co-writer, Tesla, Master of Lightning (PBS); Producer, six television specials with Suze Orman (PBS).



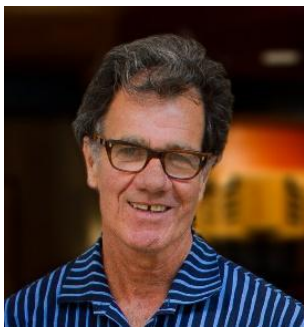
Laetitia Giansily-Doyle Laetitia started her professional career in the United States as Cooperation Attaché at the Cultural Service of the French Consulate in San Francisco. She spent 10 years working in the audiovisual industry and has worked successively for ITVS production company (based in San Francisco), France Television (sports department) and joined in 2007, the sales team of Europe Images International, the distribution arm of Lagardère Group, where she served as its International Sales Manager for 4 years. Between 2004 and 2006, she wrote and hosted a monthly talk show aired on local TV channel " Access SF." Since 2012, she has been based in Washington DC, acting as the Acquisitions and Sales Representative for the distribution company Terranoa -- specialists in documentary films, series and factual content. Laetitia's role includes: developing and sourcing documentary films and catalogues from independent producers and filmmakers; handling pre-sales and co-productions; and overseeing sales to the Americas, Australia, Southern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.



Sheree Guitar started her career as a television writer in 1987 as a writer on NBC's THE DAYS AND NIGHTS OF MOLLY DODD. Over the next fifteen years, Sheree continued to work as a television writer on numerous shows including ROSEANNE. In 2003, Sheree decided to open her own boutique literary management and production company, Sheree Guitar Entertainment, where she utilized her talent and experience as a TV writer to find and groom the next generation of writers.



Jenny Halper is director of production and development at Maven Pictures, and has served as development executive on films including THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT, THE WHISTLEBLOWER, and BERNIE. Projects in development at Maven include adaptations of Jennifer Gilmore's THE MOTHERS, Colum McCann's DANCER, and David Lozell Martin's CRYING HEART TATTOOS, as well as TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE (Allison Anders to direct), and several TV series. Her adaptation of Laura Van Den Berg's WHAT THE WORLD LOOKS LIKE WHEN ALL THE WATER LEAVES US was an Athena List winner in 2015.



Peter Hamilton is a senior consultant specializing in business development for the unscripted video industry. His clients have included CBS, Discovery, A+E Networks, Nat Geo Channels, Vulcan Foundation and Singapore's MDA. He recently co-EP'd "A Shot To Save The World" with Bill Gates for the BBC and Smithsonian Channel. Peter is also the founder, editor and publisher of the weekly newsletter *DocumentaryTelevision.com*.



Based in Richmond, Virginia, **Megan Holley** was named one of Variety's "10 Screenwriter's to Watch" in 2005. Her screenplay, SUNSHINE CLEANING, starring Amy Adams, Emily Blunt and Alan Arkin, screened at the Sundance Film Festival in 2008 and made its theatrical release in 2009. Megan has written scripts for Fox 2000, Paramount Vantage and Showtime, and is currently writing on a feature project for the J.J. Abrams' company, Bad Robot.



Adam Leipzig has been a producer, distributor or supervising executive on more than 30 films that have disrupted expectations, including *A Plastic Ocean* (2016), *March of the Penguins* (2005), *Honey*, *I Shrunk the Kids* (1989), *Dead Poets Society* (1989) and *Titus* (1999). His movies have won or been nominated for 10 Academy Awards, 11 BAFTA Awards, 2 Golden Globes, 2 Emmys, 2 Directors Guild Awards, 4 Sundance Awards and 4 Independent Spirit Awards. Collectively, his projects have generated over \$2 billion in revenue on \$300 million production spending, and twice he has been responsible for the 'most profitable picture of the year.' Mr Leipzig is founder and CEO of Entertainment Media Partners; Senior Advisor to CreativeFuture, a non-profit organization that advocates for the rights of creative communities; Publisher and Managing Editor of Cultural Weekly; and a faculty member at the prestigious UC Berkeley Haas

School of Business. He is also the former President of National Geographic Films, where he raised \$125 million in production financing, and was a Senior VP at Walt Disney Studios. Mr. Leipzig is author of two books for emerging filmmakers published by Macmillan: *Inside Track for Independent Filmmakers* and *Filmmaking in Action: Your Guide to the Skills and Craft*, which has become the standard learning text at universities and colleges. Mr. Leipzig has written for the *New York Times*, *CEO.com*, *Smart CEO Magazine*, and many others.

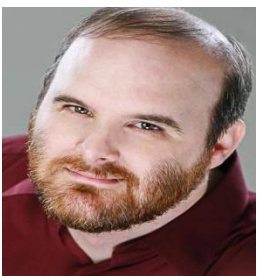


Brigid Maher is a tenured, associate professor of Film and Media Arts. She is Co-Director of the Center for Media and Social Impact and Associate Division Director of the Film and Media Arts Division at American University. Maher's creative work concentrates on national and international women's issues with a particular focus on the Middle East and more recently women's health. Her latest documentary, *THE MAMA SHERPAS*, is currently screening across the country and follows nurse-midwives, the doctors they work with, and their patients, over the course of two years. The documentary provides an intimate glimpse into what midwives can bring to the birthing process in the hospital system. The film is executively produced by Ricki Lake and Abby Epstein (*THE BUSINESS OF BEING BORN*) and distributed by Bond/360. Maher's previous award winning documentary, *VEILED VOICES*, followed three Muslim religious leaders in

Egypt, Syria and Lebanon and screened on over 150 public television stations across the United States with multiple national satellite broadcasts. The film was also featured in numerous international film festivals, including Al Jazeera Documentary Film Festival and the Los Angeles Women's International Film Festival and is distributed by Arab Film Distribution. Her other films include the narrative short *AWOL* and the feature film *ADRIFT IN THE HEARTLAND*. Maher's contribution to the academy further includes her roles as the co-executive editor of the online Journal for Digital Media Arts and Practice, incoming president of the International Digital Media Arts Association and Conference Vice President for the University Film and Video Association.



Marina Martins has over 25 years "on the set" practical experience covering each film production department. She line-produced *MNEMOSYNE*, edited *OUT OF RAIN* and *TERROR AT TATE MANOR*, produced *SPIN*, and written and directed many more projects. Her passion is international co-production and she has consulted for Entertainment Business Group, specializing in development, marketing and distribution. Marina's company Pigmental Studios, which has offices in Washington, DC and Los Angeles, is home to a corps of renowned animation artists and technologists who produce groundbreaking work in cooperation with international production partners.



Matt McNevin is an award-winning independent filmmaker based in the Washington, DC area. His films and screenplays have been recognized for excellence by festivals and contests across the country. He has been the recipient of two TIVA Peer Awards and was part of the team on a short film that was awarded a CINE Golden Eagle. For the past thirteen years, Matt has taught screenwriting as an adjunct professor at American University. He has also spent the past ten years filming and directing a feature documentary about open mike stand-up comedy entitled *OPEN MIKE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE TO BOMB*, which will be completed in 2017.



Erica Meehan consults with distinguished clients in the educational media world to design, produce and optimize projects for maximum audience impact and fundraising success. With nearly 20 years' industry experience spanning television and film production, corporate and foundation fundraising, strategic marketing and nonprofit management, Meehan has generated more than \$100 million in funding from federal agencies, private foundations, and major corporations for broadcast programs, feature and IMAX-format films, and interactive media for some of the world's most prestigious media brands, including National Geographic, PBS, and Windscreen USA. She has partnered with the Smithsonian Institution, Girl Scouts of America, Dave Matthews Band, Disney, and Whirlpool Corporation, among others, on major national/local outreach initiatives to generate measurable outcomes for audiences alongside revenue for producers. She has authored federal grants to the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration (NOAA), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and Department of Education (ED) for major media and other informal educational programs, and has served as a co-PI and peer reviewer on multiple NSF panels as well as a consultant to the federally-funded Ready to Learn project. Prior to launching Meehan Media Consulting, she held management positions both in non-profit media production and fundraising, serving as Associate Vice President of Strategic Alliances at the Jane Goodall Institute and Manager of Film Production at National Geographic Entertainment.



Claudia Myers was named one of "10 Filmmakers to Watch in 2015" by *Independent Magazine*. She wrote, directed and produced FORT BLISS starring Michelle Monaghan and Ron Livingston. The film won several festival awards and top critics at *The Washington Post* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* cited FORT BLISS among the best films of 2014. Prior to this, Claudia wrote and directed KETTLE OF FISH starring Matthew Modine and Gina Gershon, and produced BELOW THE BELTWAY. As a screenwriter, Claudia has won numerous awards, was twice a finalist for the Sundance Screenwriters Lab, and is an alumna of the Hamptons Screenwriters Lab. Most recently, her script WILD OATS, directed by Andy Tennant, was released in 2016 by the Weinstein Company. Claudia is an associate professor in the Film &

Media Arts division of American University's School of Communication.



Nina Noble has worked extensively in film & television. With more than 30 years experience, she has worked as a production assistant, a second assistant director, an assistant director, a producer, and a production manager. Some of the notable filmmakers that Nina has worked with include Alan Parker, Paul Mazursky, Ron Shelton, Stephen Frears, Paul Verhoeven, and Ivan Reitman. She has collaborated with David Simon on several projects including *The Wire* and *Treme*, and currently serves as Executive Producer on the upcoming HBO series "The Deuce."



Bill Svano is an award-winning screenwriter and playwright. He has written highly acclaimed and rated television movies including MILES TO GO which won a Christopher Award; TERROR ON THE BEACH; RETURNING HOME; THE DREAMMAKERS; THE CARDBOARD HOUSE, and SPARKS. Feature films include, WALTZ ACROSS TEXAS, starring Anne Archer, and FATAL BEAUTY, starring Whoopi Goldberg. His first play, THE NEWSTAND, won awards in New York and Europe. His plays, THE BLACK DUCK, PUNCH AND JUDY, THE LAST LAUGH, and CALLBACK have been published and are performed around the country. For five years he was the playwright in residence for Zephyr Rep in New York. He taught playwriting and screenwriting at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for seven years. Currently he teaches at festivals and

forums around the country and also does private coaching.



Lisa Thrasher is an Independent Film Producer, Entertainment Law Specialist and Film Professor, currently an Adjunct Professor at George Mason University. At POWER UP Films, Lisa was President of Film Production & Distribution at Power Up Films, where she worked on projects such as GIRLTRASH: ALL NIGHT LONG, ITTY BITTY TITTY COMMITTEE, GET TO KNOW US FIRST (PSA), LITTLE BLACK BOOT, BILLY'S DAD IS A FUDGE-PACKER, DEBS, and STUCK. At 20th Century Fox, Lisa did International Anti-Piracy Litigation & Trademark Prosecution and Anti-Piracy Advocacy seated on the Motion Picture Association's International Anti-Piracy Committee with major production studios where Lisa conducted negotiations with Foreign Heads of State to protect the studios' films. Lisa has worked around the world at institutions such as Chung Ang University, The Goethe Institut, The South African Broadcasting Corporation, University of Buffalo, Ohio State University. She has also served as a panelist and screener for film festivals such as Pop! Impact Forum, Madrid's Spanish Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, South by Southwest, and Sundance Film Festival. She has worked on projects such as LUNCH BOX HEROES and OPEN FOR BUSINESS.



Sara Elizabeth Timmins established Life Out Loud Films to create quality, inspiring films that make a positive community impact and champion women in film. The company motto is "Don't just make a film, make a difference". She recently co-produced the feature COMING THROUGH THE RYE and produced WISH YOU WELL, based on the novel by New York Times best-selling author David Baldacci. She also produced LAKE EFFECTS starring Jane Seymour which can be seen on The Hallmark Channel and in over 30 countries. She is currently in development on several films including SHOELESS WONDERS, an inspirational sports drama inspired by real events. In 2010, Sara Elizabeth was inducted into the Opportunity Hall of Fame for her contribution through filmmaking to economic development in Virginia and in this same year was presented the 'Regional Advocate Award' by the Smith Mountain Lake Chamber for her impact. She is a member of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences and a qualified independent producer for NBC Universal/IFTA



Ann Zamudio is an award winning filmmaker and the owner of Clever Gretel Productions. She's currently Producing and Directing DON'T TALK ABOUT THE BABY, the first documentary to explore the cultural stigmas surrounding pregnancy loss and infertility. Ann serves on the Board of Directors for Women in Film & Video. She has run three successful crowdfunding campaigns on two popular platforms and raised over \$50,000 for DON'T TALK ABOUT THE BABY.

Conference Organizer: Jane Barbara



After receiving a full scholarship from The Rockefeller Scholarship Fund, **Jane Barbara** graduated with a Fine Arts Degree from Parson's School of Design. She also studied Theater Management with Sir Rudolf Bing, (Manager, The Metropolitan Opera) at Brooklyn College. She went on to live various artistic lives: Costume/set designer, (ANYTHING GOES), Teenage Performing Arts Workshop – New York City Board of Education Music Department summer program. Costumer/Crew (THE NUTCRACKER) Long Island Ballet. Costume/Set Designer, (BOY MEETS BOY), 13th Street Theater. Co-founder of the Bi-Lingual Theater Company of New York, Set Designer (ODD COUPLE, JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT, A CHRISTMAS CAROL), Brooklyn NYC. Political illustrator (*The New York Times*), freelance graphic and book jacket designer, and Publications Designer for Exxon Corporation. After leaving Exxon, Jane was partner/art director of Menu Makers Plus, a full-service design company located in New York City, which serviced the NYC metro area restaurants and gourmet shops.

After moving to Maryland, Jane was able to combine her love of film, art, dance, and storytelling by writing and producing films. She has completed five feature length screenplays, three shorts, and is currently working on developing several television series. Jane is Chair for Women in Film & Video-DC's annual filmmaker conference ScriptDC.

Along with producing partner, Oriana Oppice, Jane recently wrote and produced an award winning comedy short, LOBSTER FRA DIAVOLO – The Movie, which was screened at the 2015 Cannes Court Metrage Shorts Film Corner, as well as a dozen other international film festivals. The LOBSTER screenplay was a finalist at the 2014 Moondance International Film Festival screenplay competition, and a 2014/ 2015 Roy W. Dean Finalist. LOBSTER recently received several awards for Best Comedy, Best Editing and Best Screen Fight.