



Hedgebrook
WOMEN AUTHORIZING CHANGE

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Hedgebrook and Humanitas Launch Second Annual Screenwriters Lab

From Whidbey Island to Los Angeles, Hedgebrook and Humanitas are building a community that harnesses the power of film as a storytelling medium to change the cultural conversation. The launch of the Lab is funded by the “Woolf Pack” – a powerhouse Hollywood community who are working with Hedgebrook to raise women’s voices.

Seattle, WA (October 2016) – Hedgebrook, the renowned writer’s retreat on Whidbey Island, WA (north of Seattle) launched its second annual Screenwriter’s Lab this month, bringing five female screenwriters together for a weeklong residency to develop their projects with two mentors from the film industry: filmmaker Robin Swicord and screenwriter Pamela Grey.

Chosen from a talented applicant pool of 226 screenwriters from around the country, this year’s five Screenwriters Lab participants are: Ellie Foubmi, from New Rochelle, NY; and Jessica Chou, Desha Dauchan, Gabriela Garcia Medina and Bianca Asibu from the Los Angeles area. Honorable mention semi-finalists are Megan Swertlow, Ana Brown, Caroline Keene and Carol Liu.

The two mentors bring years of experience from their work in the industry. Robin Swicord’s credits include: *Wakefield* starring Bryan Cranston and Oscar winner *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* starring Brad Pitt. Pamela Gray’s credits include: *Music of the Heart* starring Meryl Streep and *Conviction* starring Hilary Swank.

Swicord, known for championing women in the film industry, says: “This program comes just as we’re hearing the call to see more films being made by women. For that to happen, we need to offer women writers mentorships and connections to the industry, as well as the space and time to do our work – and with the support of Humanitas, Hedgebrook is providing all of that.”

Hedgebrook Executive Director Amy Wheeler agrees, “Film and television are arguably the most powerful mediums for storytellers in our time. If women’s voices are not being equally heard in those industries, we’re only getting half the story. And we need to be hearing the whole story. I can’t wait to see the incredible scripts, films and strong roles for women that come out of this Lab.”

As a Humanitas philanthropic partner, Hedgebrook receives funding from the Woolf Pack, a powerhouse community of 100 women in Hollywood. Humanitas Executive Director Cathleen Young describes the Woolf Pack’s genesis: “Named for Virginia Woolf’s renowned essay, *A Room of One’s Own*, which explores the needs and challenges of women writers in a male-dominated world, the Woolf Pack now comes together twice a year, to support a non-profit engaged in social change. From the overarching Humanitas mission to change the world one story at a time, stems the Woolf Pack’s mission to unite and support women authoring change.”

The Woolf Pack heartily back the Lab with their contributions. Members include: Shonda Rhimes, Ava DuVernay, Jenji Kohan, Mara Brock Akil, Lena Dunham, Danai Gurira and Mindy Kaling, among many others.

Screenwriters are hosted with Hedgebrook's radical hospitality for a week: each writer lives in her own cottage in the woods, and meals are prepared by Hedgebrook's in-house chefs with produce harvested from its organic garden. Post-residency, the Woolf Pack will continue to offer mentorship and guidance to bring projects to fruition.

Hedgebrook's 2016 Screenwriters Lab is held **October 15th - 22nd**. For more information and to apply in 2017, visit www.hedgebrook.org/screenwriters-lab.

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Hedgebrook supports the work of visionary women writers whose stories and ideas shape our culture now and for generations to come. Founded in 1988, Hedgebrook hosts a global community of writers at our Whidbey Island retreat. Our programs empower women writers through exceptional workshops and connect their work with thousands of book-lovers and audiences each year through readings, screenings, events, salons, publications and festivals. For more information about Hedgebrook's programs and upcoming events, visit www.hedgebrook.org. Hedgebrook is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

For over four decades the **Humanitas Prize** has empowered writers with financial support and recognition to tell stories, which are both entertaining and uplifting, that create a shift, however large or small, in the collective consciousness. Humanitas has partnered with other non-profits who share their mission of encouraging and empowering the next generation of writers. As philanthropic partners, Humanitas and Hedgebrook provide the setting and expertise to support the creative process of a diverse group of female screenwriters.