

REFRAME LAUNCHES REFRAME RISE –
A CAREER ACCELERATION SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM FOR EXPERIENCED FEMALE DIRECTORS TO LEAD COMMERCIAL FEATURES AND HIGH PROFILE TELEVISION

**Inaugural Class of ReFrame Rise Directors Announced at the
2019 Women In Film Annual Gala on Wednesday, June 12, 2019**

Hulu Signs on as ReFrame Rise Co-Sponsor

Los Angeles, CA, (June 13, 2019) **ReFrame™**, a collaborative initiative of WIF LA and Sundance Institute, announced the inaugural class of **ReFrame Rise™** directors at the **2019 Women In Film Annual Gala** on Wednesday, June 12 at The Beverly Hilton Hotel. The inaugural class of **ReFrame Rise** directors include **Desiree Akhavan, Haifaa al-Mansour, Patricia Cardoso, Hanelle Culpepper, Sydney Freeland, Zetna Fuentes, Tina Mabry** and **Meera Menon**.

ReFrame Rise is a comprehensive and customized 2-year sponsorship that provides endorsement and support to accelerate high-level sustainable careers for experienced female directors who are poised to lead studio and independent features, pilots, and episodic television across all platforms.

During the Women In Film Annual Gala, actor, director, and producer, **Kyra Sedgwick**, introduced the inaugural class of ReFrame Rise directors, four of whom were in attendance (Haifaa al-Mansour, Patricia Cardoso, Hanelle Culpepper and Tina Mabry). Commenting on the program, Sedgwick stated: “As an actor transitioning into directing, I know how important it is to be supported at every level in this industry – and that it requires a community-wide commitment to expand the lens and include bright new voices and perspectives.”

Participants selected for the ReFrame Rise Directors Program receive complimentary memberships to IMDbPro (<http://www.imdbpro.com>), the essential resource for entertainment industry professionals, to manage and showcase their IMDb profile and discover and connect with key collaborators to bring their projects to life.

ReFrame is excited to announce that Hulu has joined ReFrame Rise for a three-year commitment. “We are proud to partner with ReFrame on the inaugural ReFrame Rise Program. At Hulu, mentorship is part of our DNA and we are excited to work with and learn from these already impressive directors as they embark on their next chapter” said Beatrice Springborn, VP, Content Development, Hulu.

About the Inaugural Class of ReFrame Rise Directors

[Desiree Akhavan](#)

Desiree Akhavan is the director and co-writer of THE MISEDUCATION OF CAMERON POST, starring Chloe Grace Moretz and Sasha Lane, which won the 2018 Sundance Grand Jury Prize. Her first film, APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR, was written as her graduate senior thesis at NYU. It premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for Best First Screenplay at the Film Independent Spirit Awards as well as Breakthrough Director at the Gotham Awards. Most recently, Desiree created the Hulu original series “The Bisexual.” She is also working on a

collection of personal essays to be published in 2020, to be published by Random House. Desiree has a BA from Smith College and an MFA from New York University's Graduate Film Program.

[Haifaa al-Mansour](#)

Haifaa al-Mansour is the first female filmmaker in Saudi Arabia. The success of her three short films, as well as the international acclaim of her award-winning 2005 documentary WOMEN WITHOUT SHADOWS, influenced a new wave of Saudi filmmakers. Haifaa's acclaimed 2012 film WADJDA received numerous awards and accolades at festivals around the world. In 2017, Haifaa released MARY SHELLEY, starring Elle Fanning and Douglas Booth. In 2018, she released the Netflix film NAPPILY EVER AFTER starring Sanaa Lathan. She recently directed episodes of "The Society" for Netflix and "Motherland: Fort Salem" for Freeform. al-Mansour is currently in pre-production on her fourth feature film, entitled THE PERFECT CANDIDATE, and is developing an animated feature with Shadowmachine entitled MISS CAMEL.

[Patricia Cardoso](#)

Patricia Cardoso is the first Latinx woman director to win a Sundance Audience Award, to direct a feature that was commercially successful in the U.S., and to receive a Student Academy Award®. Her first feature film, REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES, has become a landmark of Latinx cinema. Cardoso's directing credits include the Student Academy Award®-winning short THE WATER CARRIER, the feature TERESA'S JOURNEY, the TV movie LIES IN PLAIN SIGHT, the web series "Ro," and episodes of "Queen Sugar" and "Tales of the City." She is a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences and the Directors Guild of America.

[Hanelle Culpepper](#)

Hanelle Culpepper is an award-winning director whose credits range from superhero action adventures to thrillers to character-driven dramas. In 2019, she was chosen to direct the pilot for "Star Trek: Picard," making her the first woman to launch a new "Star Trek" series in its 53-year history. Culpepper earned her B.A. from Lake Forest College and her M.A. from USC's Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism. After working for Oscar-winning screenwriter/director Callie Khouri, Culpepper participated in the AFI's Directing Workshop for Women. Her DWW short A SINGLE ROSE screened at film festivals worldwide, including the 2004 Cannes Film Festival. Hanelle has helmed multiple independent thrillers, including MURDER ON THE 13TH FLOOR starring Tessa Thompson. Participating in NBC Universal's Directing Initiative led to an episodic directing role for "Parenthood", and to subsequent television work on "Counterpart," "Mayans M.C.," "Criminal Minds," "Grimm," "American Crime," "The Flash," "Gotham," and recently, the upcoming AMC series "NOS4A2." In 2015, Culpepper was nominated for an Image Award for Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series.

[Sydney Freeland](#)

Sydney Freeland is an Emmy-nominated film and television director. Her debut feature, DRUNKTOWN'S FINEST, premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival, and went on to receive the Jury Prize at Outfest Los Angeles. She directed the digital series "Her Story," which

received an Emmy nomination in 2016 for Short Form Series. Her second feature, the Netflix original film *DEIDRA AND LANEY ROB A TRAIN*, premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. Additionally, Freeland has directed television episodes for “Grey’s Anatomy,” “Heathers,” “Chambers,” and “Station 19.” Upcoming episodic work includes “Tales of the City,” “Impulse,” and “Fear the Walking Dead.”

[Zetna Fuentes](#)

Zetna Fuentes is a television and theater director. She most recently directed and executive produced the pilot and second episode of the new Netflix series, “Cursed” based on the illustrated novel by Frank Miller and Thomas Wheeler. Her recent credits include “The Deuce,” “Ray Donovan,” “The Chi,” “Jessica Jones,” “This is Us,” “Bosch,” “Snowfall,” and “Shameless.” Zetna previously directed on daytime dramas, “Guiding Light” and “One Life To Live,” for which she was nominated for three Daytime Emmy Awards. Fuentes was born and raised in the Bronx and began her directing career in New York theater working on numerous critically acclaimed Off-Broadway productions. She serves on the National Board of the Directors Guild of America.

[Tina Mabry](#)

Tina Mabry, a true hyphenate, is a writer, director, and producer for television and film. Mabry wrote and directed the award-winning *MISSISSIPPI DAMNED*, which premiered on Showtime in 2011. She was a producer, writer, and director on the first season of OWN’s “Queen Sugar.” She was also a co-producer, writer, and director for the second season of USA’s hit drama “Queen of the South.” Mabry’s other television directing credits include “Pose,” “Dear White People,” “Insecure,” “The Mayor,” and “Power.” In 2017, she won a DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Children’s Programming for her work on Amazon Studios’s *MELODY 1963: LOVE HAS TO WIN*. In 2019, she will be directing her first studio feature, *THE SUPREMES AT EARL’S ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT*, written by Gina Prince Bythewood.

[Meera Menon](#)

Meera Menon is a Jersey-born, LA-based filmmaker whose directing credits include the feature films *EQUITY*, which competed at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival, and *FARAH GOES BANG*, which screened at the 2013 Tribeca Film Festival and was awarded the Nora Ephron Prize. Meera has directed television shows on episodes of “Glow,” “Halt and Catch Fire,” “The Magicians,” “Outlander,” “The Terror,” “Man in the High Castle,” “The Walking Dead,” “Fear the Walking Dead,” “The Exorcist,” “Titans,” “Queen of the South,” “Snowfall,” and the new Apple show “For All Mankind.” In 2016, she wrote and directed the short film *PRESS CONFERENCE* for Refinery29’s ShatterBox Anthology, a series of shorts written and directed by women. Meera is a graduate of Columbia University and USC’s School of Cinematic Arts, and was a 2014 fellow of the Fox Global Directors Initiative.

[About ReFrame](#)

Founded and led by Women In Film and Sundance Institute, **ReFrame** employs a unique strategy, a peer-to-peer approach, in which ReFrame Ambassadors engage with senior, industry decision-makers at over 50 Partner Companies to implement ReFrame programs. The initiative’s goals are to provide research, support, and a practical framework that can be used by



Partner Companies to mitigate bias during the creative decision-making and hiring process, celebrate successes, and measure progress toward a more gender-representative industry on all levels. For more information download the [ReFrame Culture Change Handbook](#) or visit [ReFrameProject.org](#). ReFrame is made possible by support from The Harnisch Foundation; Hulu; IMDbPro; Melanie Backer—Backer Charitable Trust; Mercer; the Women at Sundance Leadership Council: Ruth Ann Harnisch, Katy Drake Bettner, Barbara Bridges, Abigail Disney, Cristina Ljungberg, Ann Lovell, Susan Bay Nimoy, Patty Quillin, Brenda Robinson, Kimberly Steward, Lynda Weinman, and Jenifer Westphal; Delta Air Lines; Zola Mashariki; and an anonymous donor. Special support provided by The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Follow ReFrame on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About Sundance Institute

Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides and preserves the space for artists in film, theatre, and media to create and thrive. The Institute's signature Labs, granting, and mentorship programs, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences to artists in igniting new ideas, discovering original voices, and building a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *Sorry to Bother You*, *Eighth Grade*, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, *Hereditary*, *RBG*, *Call Me By Your Name*, *Get Out*, *The Big Sick*, *Top of the Lake*, *Winter's Bone*, *Dear White People*, *Brooklyn*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *20 Feet From Stardom*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *I'm Poppy*, *America to Me*, *Leimert Park*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *Fun Home*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Women In Film

Women In Film advocates for and advances the careers of women working in the screen industries—to achieve parity and transform culture. Founded in 1973, Women In Film supports all women working in film, TV, and digital media from emerging to advanced career. Our distinguished programs include: mentoring, speaker & screening series, production training program, writing labs, film finishing funds, legal aid and an annual financing intensive. Women In Film advocates for gender parity through research, education and media campaigns. Women In Film honors the achievements of women in Hollywood through the legacy series, annual Emmy and Oscar parties and our signature event, the Women In Film Annual Gala. Membership is open to all media professionals and more information can be found on our website: [wif.org](#). Follow Women In Film on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

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