

2019-2020 Distinguished Lecturer Series

Janet Grillo

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Janet Grillo is an award-winning filmmaker, Emmy Award winning producer, former motion picture studio executive at New Line Cinema, and a full time Arts Professor at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Kanbar Institute Undergraduate Film & TV Program.

In 2015, Janet directed *JACK OF THE RED HEARTS*, starring Famke Janssen and AnnaSophia Robb. It won the Jury Prize at Bentonville Film Festival, founded by Geena Davis to promote Women and Diversity; Audience Award & Best Young Actor/ Woods Hole FF; Chimera Award Gender Equality/Catalina FF; Best Feature, Best Director/Golden Door FF, amongst other awards as it played in festivals in US and abroad. *JACK OF THE RED HEARTS* made its International debut at the Rome FF - Alice Nella Cittta section. This narrative fiction feature film was released in 25 AMC theaters, seen by over 1 million people on LIFETIME TV and is currently in release via DVD/VOD/streaming throughout US/Canada/Australia/NZ. Janet was nominated for Courage in Filmmaking by the Women's Film Critic's Circle and for Best Director Feature Film by the Women's Image Awards. She was a Cultural Envoy in the US State Department's Film Diplomacy Program *AMERICAN FILM SHOWCASE*, touring with Armenia and Vietnam while screening the film in 2017.

In 2010, Janet wrote, directed & produced the acclaimed fiction feature *FLY AWAY*, which premiered at SXSW FF in 2011, where it was nominated for Best Feature. *FLY AWAY* then won Best Film and Special Jury Prize for Ashley Rickard's performance at the ARIZONA Intl Film Festival. Critically acclaimed by NY TIMES, LA TIMES, HUFFINGTON POST, NEW YORK OBSERVER, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER and VARIETY, the film was recommended by several of those critics for Oscar nominations. *FLY AWAY* was nominated for Voice Prism Award sponsored by SAHMSA. It continues to be in release in North America, streaming on iTunes and Amazon.

Janet won an Emmy as Executive Producer of the HBO documentary *AUTISM: THE MUSICAL* in 2008. That feature length documentary received two Emmy awards; Best Non-Fiction Feature and Best Editing.

During her 10-year tenure at NEW LINE CINEMA, Janet rose through the ranks from free-lance script-reader to Sr VP of Production. She launched the *HOUSE PARTY* series and the careers of many writers and directors including David O. Russell. Janet holds an MFA from NYU Tisch School of the Arts, and a BA with Honors in Theater from Wesleyan University. She was a Board member of Cure Autism Now, which merged with Autism Speaks, and is the mother of an adult child on the Autism Spectrum. She resides in New York City where she is full time faculty Associate Arts Professor at NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Kanbar Institute Dept of Undergraduate Film & Television.

Presentation Title: Identity and Representation: Whose Story is it?

Award winning filmmaker Janet Grillo has produced, written and/or directed three feature films about living with, loving and raising a child on the Autism Spectrum. In this talk she will share clips from her two fiction and one documentary feature films, discuss the emerging controversy about identity and representation, as well as the struggle for individuation between parent and child within the Autism community.