



## VISIONARIES TRIBUTE

DOC NYC VISIONARIES TRIBUTE TO HONOR  
SAM POLLARD, JEAN TSIEN,  
ALEXANDER NANAU AND YVONNE WELBON  
ON DECEMBER 10

### NANAU'S *COLLECTIVE* ADDED TO FESTIVAL LINEUP, NOVEMBER 11-19

New York, Oct 28, 2020 - DOC NYC, America's largest documentary festival, celebrating its 11th edition November 11-19, announced the honorees for its annual Visionaries Tribute, which will take place as an online event on December 10. **Lifetime Achievement** honors will be presented to **Sam Pollard** and **Jean Tsien**. The **Robert and Anne Drew Award for Documentary Excellence** will go to **Alexander Nanau** (*Collective*, newly added to the festival's lineup) and the **Leading Light Award** will go to **Yvonne Welbon**, founder of Sisters in Cinema.

"This year's Lifetime Achievement recipients are behind two of the year's most timely films - Sam Pollard as director of *MLK/FBI* and Jean Tsien as producer of *76 Days*," said DOC NYC's Artistic Director Thom Powers. "Both Sam and Jean are revered not only for their talent but also their generosity in mentoring others. We are also thrilled to honor Alexander Nanau for his feats of observational filmmaking, including his latest, *Collective*, and Yvonne Welbon for her exemplary work behind the scenes championing women filmmakers."

Films by honorees screening as part of DOC NYC this year are: *MLK/FBI*, which examines J. Edgar Hoover's relentless campaign of surveillance and harassment against Martin Luther King, Jr.; *76 Days*, an immersive look at life under COVID-19 lockdown in Wuhan, China, focused on front-line hospital workers and their patients; *Collective*, which follows a journalistic investigation into a Romanian political scandal that reaches the upper levels of government; and *Unapologetic*, executive produced by Welbon and supported by Sisters in Cinema, which profiles two passionate young Black activists in Chicago.

While traditionally the Visionaries Tribute honors have been presented during a private luncheon in Manhattan, this year the event will take place online and be available worldwide for free for anyone to watch. Details on accessing the event will be announced on docnyc.net in the coming weeks. The show will be produced by Wheelhouse Creative, led by Jeremy Workman and Rob Lyons, who have created DOC NYC's trailers and tribute reels for five years.

“Past attendees of Visionaries Tribute have described it as among the most meaningful and emotional honors of their careers,” said the festival’s Executive Director Raphaela Neihausen. “We are excited to bring that experience to a wider community of documentary fans and filmmakers around the world by hosting the 2020 edition online.”

### **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** honors individuals with a substantial body of film work. Past recipients are Martin Scorsese, Michael Apted, Wim Wenders, Orlando Bagwell, Sheila Nevins, Errol Morris, Stanley Nelson, Jonathan Demme, Barbara Kopple, Jon Alpert, Frederick Wiseman, D.A. Pennebaker, Chris Hegedus, and Albert Maysles.

The 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award goes to:

**Sam Pollard** is an Emmy® Award-winning and Oscar®-nominated director and producer whose latest film is *MLK/FBI*. His past work includes the documentaries *Four Little Girls*, *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*, *Slavery by Another Name*, *Sammy Davis, Jr.: I Gotta Be Me*, *ACORN and the Firestorm*, *Why We Hate*, and *Atlanta’s Missing and Murdered: The Lost Children*. Pollard also directed two episodes of the groundbreaking series *Eyes on the Prize II*. Since 1994 Pollard has served on the faculty of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.

**Jean Tsien** is a veteran documentary editor, producer, and story consultant. In 2020, she served as a producer on *76 Days* and an executive producer on the series *Asian Americans*. Her editing credits include: *Something Within Me*, *Scottsboro: An American Tragedy*, *Malcolm X: Make It Plain*, *Solar Mamas*, *Please Vote For Me*, *Dixie Chicks: Shut Up & Sing*, *Miss Sharon Jones!* and *The Apollo*. Her credits as an executive producer include *Plastic China*, *Please Remember Me*, *People’s Republic of Desire*, and *Our Time Machine*. Born in Taiwan, she is based in New York City.

### **ROBERT AND ANNE DREW AWARD FOR DOCUMENTARY EXCELLENCE**

The **Robert and Anne Drew Award for Documentary Excellence** is named for the pioneering husband and wife filmmaking team. The award includes a \$5,000 cash prize to the filmmakers contributed by Drew Associates, under the helm of Robert and Anne’s daughter, Jill Drew. The award honors a mid-career filmmaker or partnership that excels in observational filmmaking. Three of the past six recipients of the award have gone on to win the Oscar for Best Documentary. Past honorees include Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, Dawn Porter, Kim Longinotto, and Laura Poitras.

The 2020 Robert and Anne Drew Award goes to:

**Alexander Nanau** is a German-Romanian filmmaker. His latest documentary *Collective* premiered at the 2019 Venice and Toronto film festivals and will be released in the United States in November by Magnolia Pictures and Participant. His previous documentaries include

*The World According to Ion B*, winner of an International Emmy Award; and *Toto and His Sisters*, nominated for an European Academy Award.

### **LEADING LIGHT AWARD**

The **Leading Light Award** honors an individual making a critical contribution to documentary in a role other than as a filmmaker. The past recipients are Cynthia Lopez, Tabitha Jackson, Cara Mertes, Molly Thompson, Tom Quinn, and Dan Cogan.

The 2020 Leading Light Award goes to:

**Yvonne Welbon** is an award-winning filmmaker and founder of the Chicago-based non-profit Sisters in Cinema, inspired by her documentary of the same name about the history of Black women feature film directors. She is a Senior Creative Consultant at Chicken & Egg Pictures, and has produced and distributed dozens of award-winning films, including *Living With Pride: Ruth Ellis @100*, *The New Black*, and *Unapologetic*. Raised in an Afro-Latinx Honduran household on the South Side of Chicago, Welbon holds a BA from Vassar College, a MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a PhD from Northwestern University.

Support for the Visionaries Tribute comes from Netflix. Additional support comes from Supporting Sponsor National Geographic Documentary Films and Signature Sponsor Bloomberg Philanthropies.

More news about the features and shorts named to the festival's Short List sections, jurors for DOC NYC's competitive sections, and other festival updates will be announced in the coming weeks.

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To inquire about sponsor or partnership opportunities for DOC NYC Executive Director Raphaela Neihausen at [raphaela@docnyc.net](mailto:raphaela@docnyc.net).

**Images of Visionaries Tribute honorees:**

[2020.docnyc.net/PressAssets2020](https://2020.docnyc.net/PressAssets2020)

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