



**13th ANNUAL DOC NYC VISIONARIES TRIBUTE TO HONOR
ALEX GIBNEY and J.T. TAKAGI FOR THEIR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENTS;
PLUS AWARDS FOR RANEY ARONSON-RATH
AND STEPHEN MAING, ON NOVEMBER 11**

**DOC NYC FESTIVAL TAKES PLACE IN PERSON AND ONLINE
NOVEMBER 11 - NOVEMBER 29**

New York, August 18, 2026 - DOC NYC, America's largest documentary festival, announced the honorees for its 13th annual Visionaries Tribute, to be held at New York's Gotham Hall on November 11. **Lifetime Achievement** honors will be presented to the Oscar Award-winning filmmaker **Alex Gibney** (*Musk*; *Taxi to the Dark Side*) and the veteran sound recordist, filmmaker, and executive director of Third World Newsreel **JT Takagi**. The **Robert and Anne Drew Award for Documentary Excellence** will go to **Stephen Maing** (*The Great Experiment; Union*), and the **Leading Light Award** will go to **Raney Aronson-Rath**, the executive producer of PBS's flagship investigation series FRONTLINE.

DOC NYC's 2026 festival will take place both in person and online. The in-person events will take place November 11-19 in New York City at IFC Center, SVA Theatre, and Village East by Angelika. The festival's online presentations will extend through November 29, with online screenings available to viewers across the US.

"The Visionaries Tribute is an annual reminder of the breadth and depth of talent in our field," said DOC NYC co-founder and Director of Special Projects Thom Powers, who oversees the event. "This year's honorees exemplify a spirit of truth-telling against the odds. Alex Gibney has made several of the most attention-getting documentaries of the 21st Century. JT Takagi has a remarkable career as both a sound recordist and leader of Third World Newsreel. Stephen Maing has upheld a standard of excellence in observational filmmaking through his works. And Raney Aronson-Rath has led PBS's FRONTLINE to excel despite deep funding cuts to public television."

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** honors individuals with a substantial body of documentary film work. Past recipients are Joe Brewster, Michèle Stephenson, Lois Vossen, Alan Berliner, Marcia Smith, Michael Moore, Deborah Shaffer, Werner Herzog, Geralyn White Dreyfous, Joan

Churchill, Raoul Peck, Sam Pollard, Jean Tsien, Martin Scorsese, Michael Apter, 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 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award goes to:

Alex Gibney is an Oscar-, Emmy-, Grammy-, Peabody-, and WGA Award-winning filmmaker. His latest film *Musk*, an unvarnished examination of Elon Musk, is set to premiere at Venice and TIFF, and be released to theaters in fall 2026. His celebrated works include *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*; *Taxi to the Dark Side*; *Client 9*; *Mea Maxima Culpa: Silence in the House of God*; *We Steal Secrets*; *The Armstrong Lie*; *Going Clear: Scientology & the Prison of Belief*; *Steve Jobs: The Man in the Machine*; *Sinatra: All or Nothing at All*; *The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley*; *Citizen K*; *Totally Under Control*; *In Restless Dreams: The Music of Paul Simon*; and *Knife: The Attempted Murder of Salman Rushdie*.

JT Takagi is an award-winning independent filmmaker, sound recordist, and the executive director of Third World Newsreel, a progressive alternative media center. Her own films are primarily on Asian/Asian American and immigrant issues, including *Bittersweet Survival*; *Homes Apart: Korea*; *The Women Outside*; and *North Korea: Beyond the DMZ*, which aired nationally on PBS. As a sound engineer, she has recorded numerous public television and theatrical documentaries that have earned Emmy and Cinema Audio Society awards, including Yance Ford's *Strong Island* and Stanley Nelson's *Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution*. She teaches at The New School and City University of NY.

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 contributed by Drew Associates. 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 Elizabeth Lo, Lucy Walker, Maite Alberdi, Ondi Timoner, Peter Nicks, Alexander Nanau, Steven Bognar and Julia Reichert, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, Dawn Porter, Kim Longinotto, and Laura Poitras.

The 2026 Robert and Anne Drew Award goes to:

Stephen Maing is an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, cinematographer, and editor based in New York City. His most recent film, *The Great Experiment* (directed with Eric Daniel Metzgar), is a poetic portrait of America during the first Trump administration. His other films include *Union* (directed with Brett Story); *Crime + Punishment*; *High Tech, Low Life*; and *The Surrender*.

Jill Drew, the general manager of Drew Associates, who established this award at DOC NYC, said, "Observational documentary demands patience, perseverance, and precision planning. Stephen Maing has proven to be a master of the form. He is also a filmmaker for our times,

focusing on characters who confront oppressive power structures. He has a gift not only for wielding a camera, but also for using it as a tool of empathy."

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 Carlos A. Gutiérrez, Jenni Wolfson, Erika Dilday, Sonya Childress, Chi-hui Yang, Yvonne Welbon, Cynthia Lopez, Tabitha Jackson, Cara Mertes, Molly Thompson, Tom Quinn, and Dan Cogan.

The 2026 Leading Light Award goes to:

Raney Aronson-Rath is an Oscar-winning producer and a leading voice in documentary filmmaking and distribution as editor-in-chief and executive producer of FRONTLINE, PBS' flagship investigative journalism documentary series. She also leads the GBH Documentary Unit, which includes FRONTLINE, NOVA, and American Experience. Aronson-Rath has spearheaded FRONTLINE's expansion into the theatrical documentary space with global reach. Producing more than 20 films each year on the defining issues of our time, select highlights during her tenure include: winning the Academy Award® for *20 Days in Mariupol* and receiving Academy Award® nominations for *Abacus: Small Enough to Jail* and *For Sama*. Under her leadership, FRONTLINE Features produced and distributed *One in a Million*, which follows the ten-year journey of a Syrian refugee and won the Sundance Audience Award and jury prize for directing.

Support for the Visionaries Tribute comes from Supporting Sponsors National Geographic Documentary Films and Netflix.

For information about purchasing a table at the Visionaries Tribute or advertising in the program book, please contact Allyson Morgan at allyson@docnyc.net.

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

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DOC NYC is produced and presented by IFC Center, a division of AMC Networks.

To inquire about sponsor or partnership opportunities for DOC NYC, contact Executive Director Raphaela Neihausen at raphaela@docnyc.net.

TICKETS AND PASSES:

Passes for the DOC NYC PRO conference, held November 12-19, are on sale now [here](#).

Film tickets will go on sale in October when the program is announced.

ONLINE PRESS OFFICE:

Downloadable images of Visionaries Tribute honorees can be found [here](#).

MEDIA CONTACT:

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