

## **Programme Summary**

The Advanced Writing for Television Drama programme was devised with the purpose of building the professional writing skills and collaborative principles necessary for writers to succeed at the highest level in the competitive genre of primetime drama series. Writers with proven credits and experience were nominated by senior industry professionals. The programme, spread over the course of 10 months is intended to create a viable resource of experienced and reliable writers for the industry.



*Roanna Benn session from Module 1*

## **Modules 1-3**

**(2017: Module 1 – April and Module 2 – July  
2018: Module 3 – January)**

Across the first two of our three modules, we have been extremely well supported by the industry from all sides with involvement from writers including: **Paul Abbott** (NO OFFENCE, SHAMELESS, STATE OF PLAY), **Danny Brocklehurst** (IN THE DARK, ORDINARY LIES), **Tony Jordan** (DICKENSIAN, HUSTLE), **Bryan Elsley** (CLIQUE, SKINS), **Jed Mercurio** (LINE OF DUTY), **Peter Bowker** (THE A WORD) and **Julie Geary** (CUFFS, SECRET DIARY OF A CALL GIRL). Amongst the production company executives were **Jane Featherstone** (MD, Sister Pictures), **Willow Grylls** (Founder, New Pictures), **Sarah Stack** (Head of Development, BBC), **Roanna Benn** (MD, Drama Republic), **Sally Haynes** (MD, Mainstreet Pictures) and **Tom Winchester** (Creative Director, DNA Films). Broadcast perspectives were given by **Polly Hill** (ITV), **Chris Aird** (BBC) and **Lizzie Gray** (SKY).

European perspectives ranged from Executive **Tatjana Andersson** (Head of Development, Palladium Fiction, Sweden) to writer **Jeppe Gram** (FOLLOW THE MONEY, BORGEN, DENMARK). The US workshops of experienced Showrunners **Chris Black** (MAD MEN, OUTCAST) and **Rina Mimoun** (MISTRESSES, GILMORE GIRLS), and the unique bridge between the US and Europe, **Frank Spotnitz** (MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, X-FILES, HUNTED) provided invaluable insight.



*Frank Spotnitz in discussion from Module 2*

Module 2 has focused on the skills required for collaborative writing, with US Showrunners demonstrating the writers room through two days of Simulated Writers Rooms (SWOOM) with associated 'homework', writing and story breaking tasks. Frank Spotnitz showed how this system can be adapted for the UK industry. Jeppe Gjervig Gram added a further dimension to the different ways of collaborative writing through his introduction of the Danish 'One Vision' model. This model evolved through observation of the more collaborative process established in the US and tailoring it to what Denmark needed for its own purposes.



*Simulated Writers Room from Module 2*

For Module 3, the principal focus will be on the advanced production process involving representatives of commissioning and production teams. This module will take into account visits to sets, as well as roundtable discussions led by experienced executives in the Scripted Drama Industry. The more insight and awareness writers can gain of the various stages of these two processes, including liaising with those responsible for the ongoing notes and editorial changes, coordinating with producers to directors, to production staff and sets, the better the writers can contribute to the smooth and effective running of the overall process. We hope that this will help to cement the working relationships that are integral to the development and production of TV Drama shows.

Following up the completion of each Module, participants are being supported in the sustained development of an original project. By application of what they have learnt during the Programme, as well as through a schedule of collaborative writing and notes sessions involving a team of 9 script editors, each participant receives one-on-one development of their project to a full treatment and second draft script stage, pitch ready for the contacts they have connected with through the Programme.