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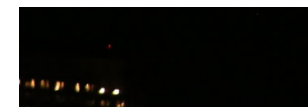
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sted on June 16, 2022





Awards gala at Tribeca Rooftop on Monday, June 6. It was the first time that the event was held in person since 2019. Some patrons gathered in suits and cocktail dresses, while others wore clothing native to their country in a nod to the organization's LGBTQ human rights role at the United Nations. The banter touched on global hotspots from Ukraine to the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa. The ceremony featured celebrity news journalist and television personality Katie Couric, who would remark to the audience how much she herself had learned that evening about international LGBTQ issues. Influencer and TV personality Nikkie de Jager, also known as [NikkieTutorials](#), who came out as transgender in 2020, served as MC.

Three awards were given out: The Felipa De Souza Award was bestowed to Mexican activist and professor Gloria Careaga, the OutSpoken Award went to American Brent Miller of Procter & Gamble, and the OutStanding Award was given to Russian artist and former Pussy Riot member Nadya Tolokonnikova, who was honored remotely.

Rachel Wright (and family), Thank You For Coming Out (While Staying In)

Thank You for Coming Out

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Before her speech, Careaga, who co-founded [El Closet de Sor Juana](#), told Gay City News about the nature of her work in Mexico — and compared it to the United States. Careaga said something that separates the US from Mexico is that President Biden's administration has an individual specifically dealing with LGBTQ rights, Jessica Stern, who serves as the US special envoy to advance the human rights of LGBTQI people.

“In many cases, we can easily approach the government and they really help us,” Careaga said. “But on other occasions, like now, the government is not friendly.”

Tolokonnikova, who beamed in remotely, was honored for helping raise \$7 million for Ukraine in the face of the Russian invasion.

Before the speeches, Miller spoke with Gay City News about the link between corporations and the LGBTQ community — and Miller said corporations must be part of the communities they serve. Miller emphasized the importance of visibility, but still acknowledged the critics of corporate sponsorship and said companies do not always get it right.

“I like to say that every Pride is somebody’s first Pride, and that goes for people and also goes for brands and companies,” Miller said. “There’s a young kid out there right now that needs those companies to be waving that, that rainbow, far and wide, because that’s how we get additional visibility. That’s how we create conversation.”

OutRight’s Acting Executive Director, Maria Sjödin, explained that the pandemic brought new challenges to the organization, forcing the group to pivot to assist communities requiring more urgent assistance.

“We needed to be there for communities around the world, and our partner organizations needed to be there for the communities in order to stay relevant,” Sjödin said. “Because if people don’t have food, they don’t have shelter, they just lost their jobs, they don’t have anything in the midst of a pandemic, you have to be there. Who else is going to take you seriously afterwards?”

Throughout the evening, especially in relation to Tolokonnikova’s work, difficulties for Ukrainian LGBTQ people were part of the conversation. Sjödin told Gay City News that journalists often ask where in the world is the worst place for LGBTQ people, but that answer is not so simple.

“For an individual who is not being respected, who’s losing their job, who’s facing violence or discrimination, I mean, for them, wherever they live, it’s going to be the worst,” Sjödin said.

Among those on hand from countries included Micheal Ighodaro of Nigeria. Adorned in a pale blue tulle ensemble of his own creation, Ighodaro, who is on the OutRight board, told Gay City News the evening served a reminder of how many international LGBTQ issues are different from the issues the community has focused on in the West.

“[In] America, we’ve fought so hard for marriage equality, and that has blinded us so much,” Ighodaro said. “I think we need to open our eyes to other places across the globe, [where people] are just trying to live and survive. They haven’t even been thinking about marriage equality; they just want to live.”

Others were at the event networking from an intersectional perspective. This included Evie Litwok, founder and executive director of prisoner rights group Witness to Mass Incarceration. Litwok attended with Fabrice Houdart, who is on the board of both OutRight and her organization.

“This is an opportunity for me to talk to a handful of people in the evening, and possibly make people aware of the fact that while most people perceive prison as disproportionately Black and Brown, they don’t realize it’s also disproportionately queer,” Litwok explained. “Forty-three percent of women inside all prisons and jails identify as a sexual minority, and 10% of men. So, it should be an LGBT issue.”

Through ticket sales, donations, and a very dynamic Live Auction by Nick Medina of KLM Auctions, the evening went on to raise \$888,000. Still, Sjödin stressed that the fight for LGBTQ rights across the world is ongoing.

“There are almost 70 countries that still criminalize same sex relations,” Sjödin said. “And there are many more where LGBTQ people face harassment, discrimination,

and violence on a daily basis. Long-term advocacy sometimes takes years to accomplish. That is what needs to happen in order for the world to become more equal, more just, and more respecting of LGBTQ people everywhere.”



Gloria Careaga, a professor and the co-founder of the Mexican rights group El Closet de Sor Juana, received the Felipa De Souza Award.

MICHAEL LUONGO



Influencer and TV personality Nikkie de Jager, also known as NikkieTutorials, who came out as transgender in 2020, served as MC at the 2022 OutRight Action International Courage Awards.

MICHAEL LUONGO



Katie Couric on stage at the 2022 OutRight Action International Courage Awards.

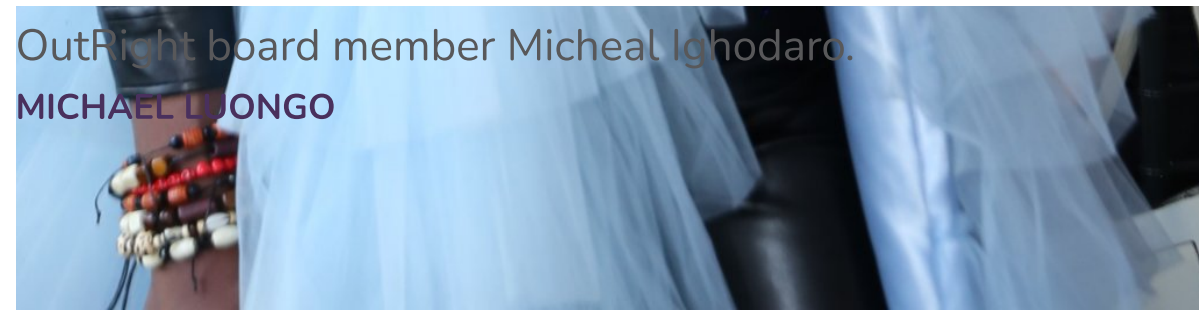
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Dayo Dane (center), Micheal Ighadaro (adjacent right), and others gather with the World Trade Center in view at Tribeca Rooftop.

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Brent Miller, senior director of global LGBTQ+ equality at Procter & Gamble, received the OutSpoken Award.

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Patrons gather for the OutRight Action International Courage Awards.

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