

Celluloid Ceiling study finds women still largely underrepresented in Hollywood

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The thriving #MeToo movement together with "Time's Up," a legal defense fund designed to help women combat sexual discrimination and harassment, underscore the struggle of women to succeed in male-dominated workplaces – including Hollywood.

Now, there are new numbers to back up what [women](#), advocates and supporters have claimed for decades. Women remain widely underrepresented in the film industry.

According to the [20th annual Celluloid Ceiling report](#) released by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University, only one percent of 2017's top grossing [films](#) employed 10 or more women in key behind-the-scenes roles, while 70 percent of films employed 10 or more men.

Martha Lauzen, executive [director](#) of SDSU's center, has been researching the topic for 20 years.

"The [film industry](#) has utterly failed to address the continuing under-employment of women behind the scenes. This negligence has produced a toxic culture that supported the recent sexual harassment scandals and truncates the careers of so many women," said Lauzen.

Overall, women comprised only 18 percent of directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 250 domestic grossing films of 2017. This is virtually the same percentage of women working in these roles 20 years ago (17 percent in 1998), according to Lauzen's research. By specific role, women accounted for 11 percent of writers, 19 percent of executive producers, 25 percent of producers, 16 percent of editors, and four percent of cinematographers.

Additionally, women made up 11 percent of

directors in 2017, an increase of four percentage points from seven percent in 2016 but even with 2000 levels. Lauzen noted that context is essential in interpreting these findings.

"2016 was a poor year for women's employment as directors. Because fewer women directed films in 2016, it would not be surprising to see the percentage rebound in 2017 as a part of the normal fluctuation in these numbers," said Lauzen.

Silver Lining on the Silver Screen

This year's study also considers the employment of women on the top 100 and 500 domestic grossing films. The analysis of the top 500 films reveals that features with at least one female director employed higher percentages of women writers, editors, cinematographers, and composers than films with exclusively male directors. For example, on films with female directors, women comprised 68 percent of writers. On films with exclusively male directors, women accounted for eight percent of writers.

About the Celluloid Ceiling Report

The Celluloid Ceiling Report has tracked women's employment on top grossing films since 1998. It is the most comprehensive, continuous study available of women's behind-the-scenes employment in film. This year's study monitored 5,342 films. In its 20-year existence, the study has tracked a total of more than 60,000 movies.

The Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University is home to the most current and wide-ranging studies of women working on screen and as part of film and television crews.

Provided by San Diego State University

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