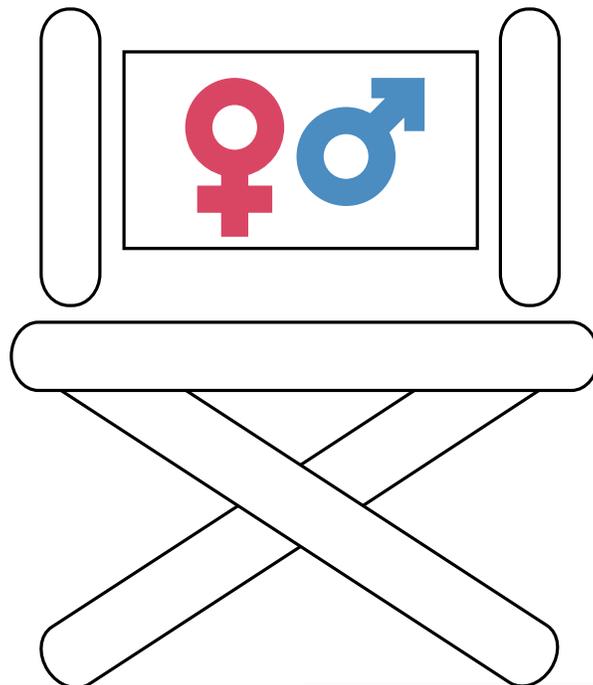


September 2016

Who is sitting in the director's chair?

GENDER INEQUALITY IN CANADIAN
SCREEN-BASED STORYTELLING



Source: "What's wrong with this picture? Directors and gender inequality in the Canadian screen-based production industry" written by Dr. Amanda Coles



The Big Picture

IN THE CANADIAN FILM AND TELEVISION industry, women continue to be overlooked to fill key creative and leadership roles. Point blank: the number of men sitting in the director's chair compared to women is alarmingly disproportionate. Without the voice of female creators working in the film, television and digital media sector, we risk women not being represented among Canada's storytellers.



The prevailing gender inequality on film and television sets across the country is revealed by the Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES) in a ground-breaking

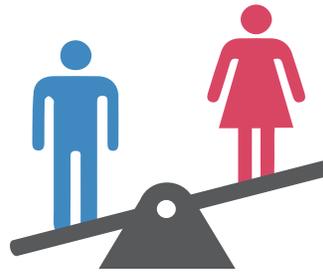
study, **What's wrong with this picture? Directors and gender inequality in the Canadian screen-based production industry.** The study goes beyond just stats and numbers mined through research on the screen-based industry. Directors Guild of Canada directors were interviewed to gather the real-life stories and experiences from those who work, live and witness this reality every day.

THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S LENS:

"The budget-challenged Canadian screen sector will win not on generating look-alike productions, but on specificity of voice. Anyone who believes that the director's unique voice is a critical part of a production's identity is bound to believe in opening our screens to Canada's brilliant diversity of voices."

Tim Southam
National President Directors Guild of Canada 2016

What we know



Gender inequality is an employment equity issue for the screen-based industry, a major sector of the Canadian economy.



Precarious work environments, employment, income insecurity and highly competitive labour markets challenge the development of a gender equity strategy.

Both domestic and international industry practices, norms and values shape Canadian screen-based production labour markets.



Given that film and television production in Canada is highly supported by government, it must serve the public interest with a diversity of voices.



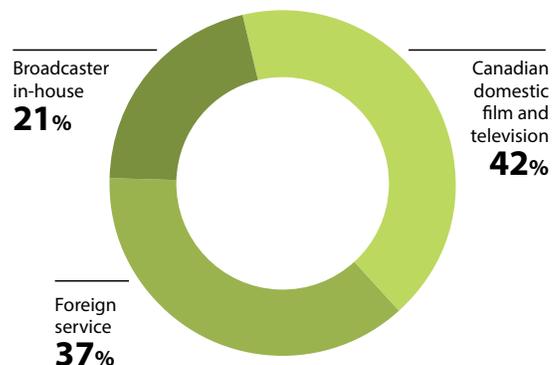
THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S LENS:

"I thought, well why can't I do what the boys do? Can't I be on a TV show as an actor and then direct some episodes? That's what guys do, right? Why can't I do it? Clooney did it. Clint Eastwood is doing it. Why can't I do that? ... Season 3 is when I asked the executives at (a major studio) if I could direct. It was the same day my male counterpart asked if he could direct. And he directed in the next season, and I directed four seasons later."

Female Canadian director

(Pg. 24) Source: "What's wrong with this picture? Directors and gender inequality in the Canadian screen-based production industry"

FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION SUB-SECTORS IN CANADA BY PRODUCTION VOLUME, 2014-18



What the study found

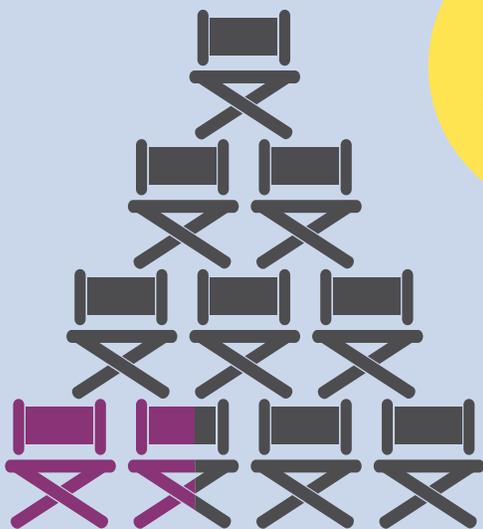
KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE OF GENDER INEQUALITY IS AN ANALYSIS NOT JUST of discrimination against women, but of systemic advantage for men. Gender inequality in the film and television production industry is a systemic problem that affects women. Nonetheless, as this body of research clearly shows, the issue is not one created by women. Consequently, solutions to an issue of considerable economic and social significance require an industry-wide effort.

Male directors on average work more often than their female colleagues.

Stereotypes prevail that position male directors as being visionary and creative and female directors as demanding and difficult.

Male directors are engaged in upwards of **84%** of the available work.

A rigid hierarchical work model drives the operations of independent film and television production in Canada.



RISKY INVESTMENT

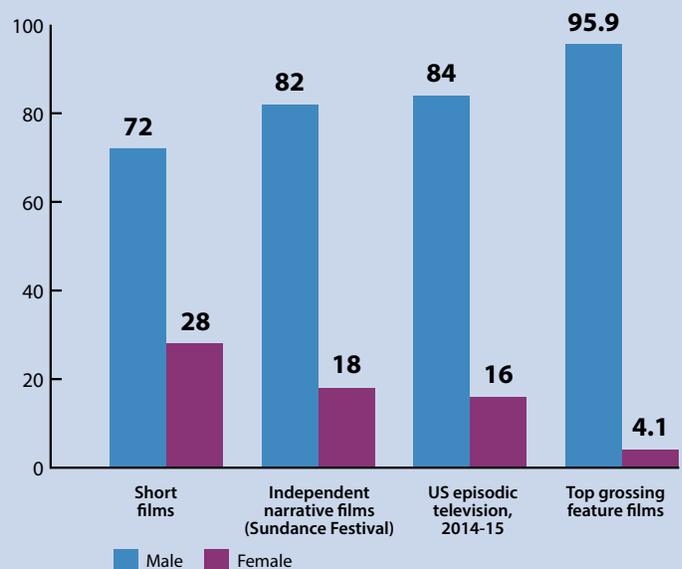
Each film and television project is subject to a complex risk-assessment by the various investors. The investment in key creative positions – the director in particular – is seen as critical to minimizing risk. Evidence clearly shows that these risk assessments are not gender-neutral. (Pg. 8)

There is no economic justification or evidence to support gender discrimination as a useful risk-management tool in film and television production.

The inverse relationship between budget size and the likelihood of female directors being attached to a project is typically described as a “fiscal cliff.”



GENDER, FILM FINANCING AND THE FISCAL CLIFF



Source: Smith, Stacy L., Katherine Pleper, Marc Chouetti, and Ariana Case. "Gender & Short Films: Emerging Female Filmmakers and the Barriers Surrounding Their Careers." USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. Lunafest Short Films, October 5, 2015.

THE ISHTAR EFFECT

- Failure is both a threat and a reality for *all* directors at some point in their careers.
- **However, female directors report that, compared to their male colleagues, professional recognition for their work is both harder to attain and hard to retain.**



- Female directors consistently report that they have to work harder and perform at a significantly, and consistently, higher standard.
- Widespread amongst the *female* directing community is the phrase, "We're ahead, you're behind."

THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S LENS

"And I swear, when I started directing, they tried every guy in the city before they would give the job to me. I mean I remember going 'Why are they bringing...? Like, here I am. I've been working here. I write. I produce.' And they bring in this guy to direct and he didn't do a very good job and then they bring in some other guy from, you know, the theatre, out in the theatre world and I'm going, 'Hey, hey!', because I'm right here."

Female Canadian director

(Pg. 27)

INCLUSION, REPRESENTATION AND BELONGING

- The lack of diversity on our screens is a missed opportunity, where we fail to capitalize on the diversity of the Canadian population's stories and experiences.
- A diverse representation in our storytelling landscape is a cornerstone of the socio-cultural objectives in Canadian cultural policy for the screen-based industries.
- A diversity of storytellers serves the commercial interests of various investors for growing highly internationalized audiences.



THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S LENS

"Somebody said that a woman director directed an episode... didn't go very well and the word from above was, 'yeah we tried hiring a woman and it didn't work out.' It's like, 'we tried hiring a person and it didn't work out, so we're not hiring people anymore.'"

Female Canadian director

(Pg. 32)

What can be done

- Adopt gender equality as a core principle in policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for the Canadian screen-based production industry.

 - Leadership through federal funding and policy bodies can serve as the first bold step towards establishing gender equality as an industry priority.
 - Canada Media Fund policy priority: Gender equality in the production sector is essential to “enabling a diversity of voice” from a “point of view” perspective.
 - Telefilm Canada policy priority: A diversity of writers, directors, producers, craftspeople and screen performers is key to developing innovative, globally-competitive, high-quality audiovisual content.
 - CRTC policy priority: Gender equality in the key creative positions that shape content production is an essential element of the ability of the Canadian broadcasting system to meet its social and cultural objectives.

- Recognize that the implementation of equality and diversity practice is good for business.

- The Canadian film and television production industry requires a significant, long-term equity investment strategy from private sector stakeholders to:
 - Produce content across a range of genres in which women and other under-represented communities hold key creative positions.
 - Eliminate gender bias in financing.

- Address implicit bias across the Canadian screen-based production industry by prioritizing inclusivity and diversity as core industry values.

- Public and private industry leaders and stakeholders, including policy and regulatory bodies, broadcasters, investors and unions, launch mandatory and accessible education and training programs to promote inclusive, diverse work environments and work practices.

- Stakeholders from across the industry, including regulatory and funding bodies and public institutions, record diversity metrics and report annually on the degree to which public funds support storytelling by under-represented communities.

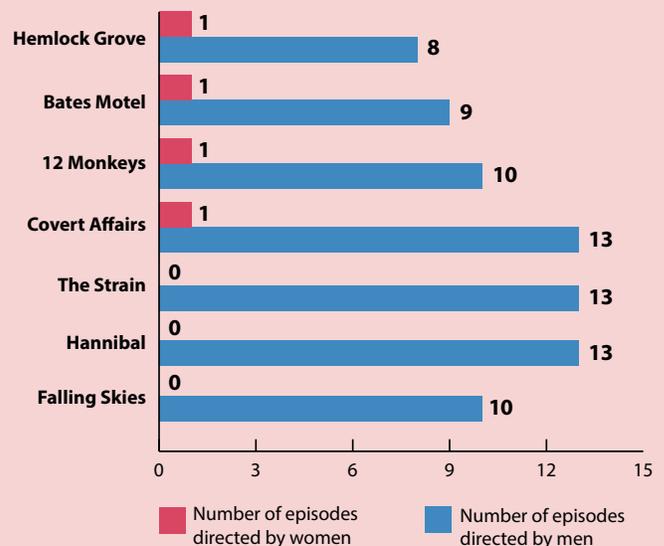
THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S LENS

“Genuine voice comes from experience and comes from culture and comes from nature and nurture and there’s no way for it to exist in any genuine way without it being manifested in a very large variety of human beings engaged in the creative process. There is absolutely no argument in favour of only having one kind of person in the director’s chair or one kind of person in the writer’s room. It’s ridiculous and no one makes that argument anymore. It just happens to be the way it is and that’s the problem. We don’t have diversity of voices yet and we certainly don’t have a diversity of voices in the screen industries at any level in any way reflective of the diversity of voice in the viewing public. As long as that dissonance exists we’ve got a huge opportunity ahead of us. It’s a challenge but it’s also a huge opportunity.”

Female Canadian director

(Pg. 38)

DIRECTORS BY GENDER, SELECT MAJOR U.S. TELEVISION SERIES SHOT IN CANADA, 2014-15



About Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES)

CUES aims to achieve gender equality in the production of screen-based media by raising awareness and generating discussion within the industry by:

- Recording annual employment and gender-based statistics from industry unions, guilds and associations;
- Reporting annually to stakeholders and the public on these employment and gender statistics; and
- Developing a gender equality checklist for voluntary use in pre-production of projects in Canadian screen-based media.

This is the second study on the topic of gender equality in Canadian film and television prepared by Dr. Amanda Coles and CUES.

THROUGH THE DIRECTOR'S LENS

"And I thought, oh, we were the front edge of a wedge of women. That was '98. And now I look behind and I go, oh...there's nobody behind us. It's all still us."

Female Canadian director

(Pg. 20)

Author bio

DR. AMANDA COLES holds a PhD in Comparative Public Policy from McMaster University. Currently an Associate Researcher with the Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work (CRIMT), Amanda has been Lecturer in the graduate program in Arts and Cultural Management at the University of Melbourne since 2013. Her work on cultural labour and Canadian politics has been published in the Canadian Journal of Communication, the European journal Cultural Trends, and for the Canadian Cultural Observatory policy research branch. Amanda also consults on a range of labour market and policy issues for the screen-based industries.



Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES) participating organizations:



A full copy of the report "What's Wrong with this picture? Directors and Gender inequality in the screen-based production industry" can be found at

<https://www.rmit.edu.au/research/research-institutes-centres-and-groups/research-centres/centre-for-people-organisation-and-work/research-themes/people/gender-equality-and-diversity>

cueonscreen.ca and dgc.ca