

**DIRECTORS** **UK**

# Cut Out of the Picture

**A campaign for  
gender equality  
among directors  
within the UK  
film industry**

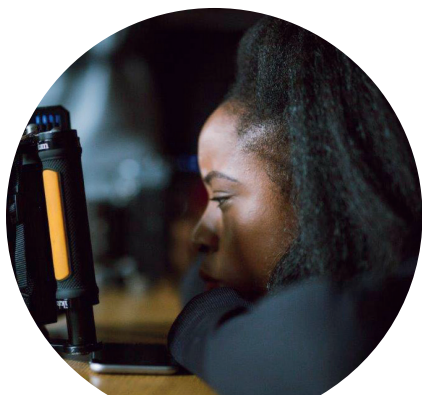
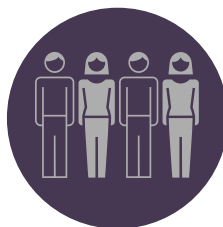
directors.uk.com  
@Directors\_UK  
#DUKFilm5050



Gender inequality in the film industry has long been acknowledged as a serious problem, but despite high profile discussions and debates progress has yet to be made on the disparity between the number of men and women working as film directors. Directors UK wanted to get behind the numbers and identify the root causes as to why women directors are consistently disadvantaged when trying to become a director and in progressing their careers.

Directors UK commissioned a study by Stephen Follows and Alexis Kreager to examine the career development of directors, and discovered how the industry culture leads to vastly different outcomes for men and women directing film. The report studied 2,591 UK films released between 2005 and 2014 to offer a comprehensive view of the industry over the last decade. The results revealed the systemic bias faced by women directors trying to progress a career, and provides us with new insight and understanding as to what is causing this inequality.

Films command a great deal of influence on everyday society and the role of directors as storytellers is fundamental to this. This is why it is incredibly important that film directors reflect the audience they serve. By diversifying the pool of directors in the film industry, we open film up to a greater range of perspectives and stories. Both publicly funded and commercial film sectors have a role to play in ensuring a healthy and diverse range of voices in UK film.



## Scope

The study looks at

**2,591**  **UK films**

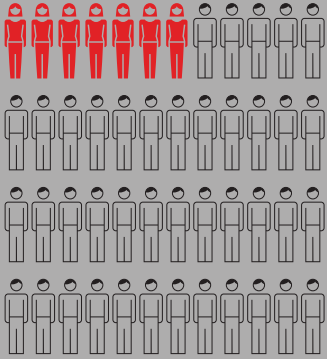
released over 10 years (2005-2014)

**The study explores how women directors are affected by:**

- Industry culture
- Budgets
- Genres
- Critics
- Audience
- Public funding
- Career progression
- Related industry careers

**For the full report visit: [directors.uk.com](https://directors.uk.com)**

# The problem



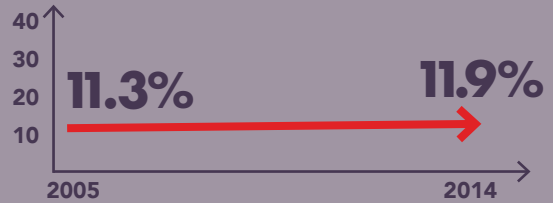
**13.6%**

of working film directors over the period studied have been women.

**11.5%**

of UK films over the period studied were directed exclusively by women.

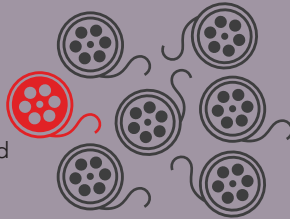
Over the ten-year period studied the percentage of UK films directed by women increased by only 0.6%



UK films are

**6x**

more likely to be directed by a man than a woman.



Women directors make fewer films in their career and are less likely to direct a

**2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> film.**



Women directors are disproportionately under-represented within certain genres.

**The scale of the problem makes it impossible for the system to rebalance by itself.**

# The causes

**Gender inequality is due to unconscious bias caused by systemic issues:**



No regulatory system to effectively monitor, report and enforce gender equality. No structured hiring and recruitment practices.

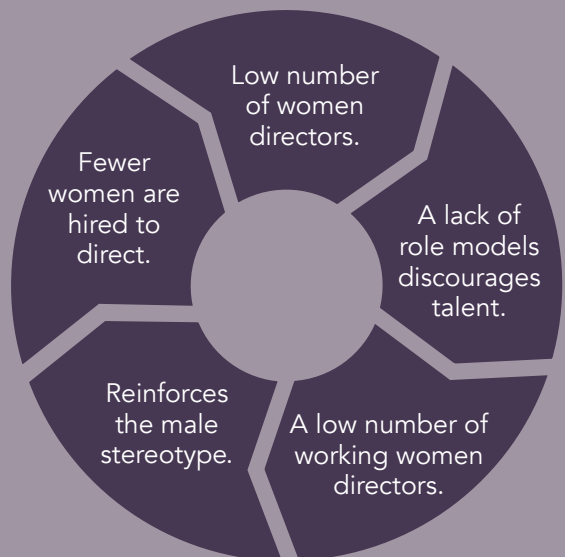
Lack of certainty in the industry leads to greater risk-aversion and greater reliance on the pre-conceived stereotype of the director as a man.



The short-term nature of projects discourages long-term thinking and the use of positive HR practices.

**Only large scale, industry-wide intervention will tackle the extreme gender inequality in the UK film industry.**

**Gender inequality in the film industry creates and supports a vicious cycle of:**



# The consequences

**Women directors' careers are limited and inhibited at every stage in becoming a film director.**



**50.1% of all film students in the UK and 49.4% of new entrants in the film industry are women.**



**27.2% of short films are directed by women.**



**21.7% of publicly funded films have a woman director.**



**16.1% of low-budget films (under £500,000) are directed by women.**



**12.8% of mid-budget films (£1-10 million) are directed by women.**

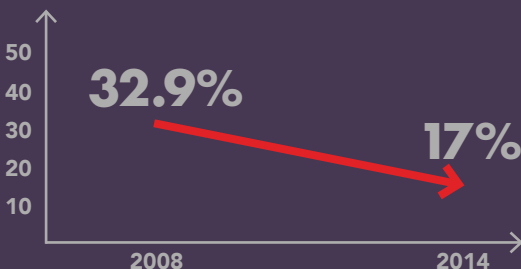


**3.3% of big-budget feature films (over £30 million) are directed by women.**

**As budgets rise fewer women are hired as directors.**

## Public funding

Public funding support for UK films directed by women has drastically fallen over seven years.



Although this is still the best performing area of the industry, if this decline continues, publicly-funded films will soon perform no better than the commercial sector on gender equality.



Over the ten-year period, only

# 21.7%

of the films with UK-based public funding had a woman director.

**The number of women directors working in the UK film industry will only ever improve with direct industry wide intervention.**

## Our recommendations

### 1 50% of films backed by UK-based public funding bodies to be directed by women by 2020

Public funded film offers one of the most direct opportunities to impact the gender inequality in the film industry. A realistic time-frame (four years) to put in place suitable schemes and initiatives to meet this target. A requirement for public funders to monitor and report on gender.

### 2 Development of the Film Tax Credit Relief system to require all UK films to take account of diversity

This aspect of government support for the UK film industry touches all films produced in the UK, and therefore is the most powerful mechanism that can directly influence industry-wide change.

### 3 Industry wide campaign to inform and influence change

Government, industry leaders, agencies, production companies and public organisations to take decisive action to tackle gender inequality, and to work together as one industry to support equal opportunity regardless of gender.

## Directors UK campaign

We will continue our campaign calling on all parts of the UK film industry to make clear their commitments to tackling the causes of gender inequality among directors. Recognising our role in supporting women to become directors and progress their careers we commit that:

**By 2020 Directors UK members of working age will be 50:50 men and women.**

**Our campaign will develop support in the following areas:**

- Advocacy
- Career development
- Information and advice
- Collaboration and partnerships with industry
- Events, skills training and networking opportunities.



**Directors UK** is the single voice of British screen directors representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 6,000 members – the overwhelming majority of working film and television directors in the UK. Directors UK campaigns for the rights, working conditions and status of directors in the industry and works closely with fellow organisations in the UK, Europe and around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns. It also promotes excellence in the craft of direction both nationally and internationally and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.

**For Press & Campaign  
enquiries please contact:**

**Victoria Morris**

Head of Communications and Public Affairs

E-mail: [commsandpublic@directors.uk.com](mailto:commsandpublic@directors.uk.com)

**Ali Bailey**

Head of Campaigns

E-mail: [abailey@directors.uk.com](mailto:abailey@directors.uk.com)

**Tolu Akisanya**

Communications & Campaigns Officer

E-mail: [takisanya@directors.uk.com](mailto:takisanya@directors.uk.com)

@Directors\_UK

#DUKFilm5050



**Contact us:**

+44 (0)20 7240 0009

[info@directors.uk.com](mailto:info@directors.uk.com)

[www.directors.uk.com](http://www.directors.uk.com)