

Women have held high profile roles in cinema going back as far as the 19th Century; in 1896, the first known female director Alice Guy-Blaché directed *The Cabbage Fairy* ('*La Fée aux Choux*'). However, it was not until 114 years later that Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to win the Oscar for Best Director for *The Hurt Locker* – she is still the only woman to win the award to date. Despite equal pay legislation and equality laws, there is massive imbalance in who tells the stories we see on screen with men outnumbering women by 5:1. Over the last few years, campaigning for equality on screen and behind the camera has been gaining more and more traction, from Jennifer Lawrence's [essay](#) speaking out about the gender pay gap in Hollywood, to Meryl Streep talking about how she still experiences sexism as an [actress](#), the fight for gender equality in the film industry has never been so prominent.



WHY WE NEED CHANGE

Despite everyone in the film world seeming to be talking about and understanding the imbalances, statistics on women working in the industry are still bleak.

- The number of female directors actually declined in 2016; of the top 250 films released in that year, only 7% were directed by women, a fall of 2% from the previous year. This decrease demonstrates how a change in attitude towards the work of women in film is needed more than ever. ¹
- Across the senior filmmaking roles of director, producer, writer, executive producer, cinematographer and editor in all films produced in 2015, only 20% of individuals across all these roles were women. More shockingly, 25% of all films studied had no women at all in these roles. ²
- UK films are six times more likely to be directed by a man than a woman. ³
- Across 2,591 UK films released over the ten-year period between 2005-2014 only 13.6% of directors working on these films were women. ⁴
- Fewer than 5% of ALL British films since 2013 have been directed by women. ⁵
- In 2015, just 17% of the top grossing films had a female lead. ⁶

These statistics show an appallingly biased industry where the vast majority of the people holding the power and telling the stories are male – and not just male, but white, heterosexual, cisgendered, middle class, middle-aged men: a very niche group.

As soon as women are involved in senior roles, things improve; films with women in roles such as director/screenwriter are much more likely to have women in other key positions. In 2015, 74% of films with a female director also had a female producer, and 69% of female screenwriters worked on a film with at least one female producer. ⁷

In 2014, this inspired Bath Film Festival (now FilmBath) to launch the F-Rating, a new film rating designed to help redress the imbalance by shining a light on the great work that women in film are doing and give exhibitors and audiences an easy way to find films where the storytellers and protagonists are women.

THE F-RATING: AN ELOQUENT SOLUTION

The F-Rated classification is applied to any film which:

- Is directed by a woman and/or
- Is written by a woman

If a film also stars significant women in their own right, it receives a TRIPLE F-Rating, the gold standard. Triple F-Rated films include: *A Wrinkle in Time* (directed by Ava DuVernay and written by Jennifer Lee), *Bridget Jones's Baby* (directed by Sharon Maguire and written by Helen Fielding and Emma Thompson); *American Honey* (directed and written by Andrea Arnold) and *The Diary Of a Teenage Girl* (directed and written by Marielle Heller).

BIRTH OF THE F-RATING

The F-Rating was created by FilmBath's Executive Director Holly Tarquini in 2014. Following its launch, the F-Rating caught the eye of the international press, including the [BBC](#), [The Telegraph](#), [Entertainment Weekly](#), [Elle](#) and [Marie Claire](#). Holly was then invited to give a [TEDx Talk](#) on the F-Rating in November 2016, which garnered further attention. In early 2017, [IMDb](#) added the key word 'F-Rated' to over 22,000 films on its site and media attention went into overdrive around the world – and the support for the F-Rating is still growing.

The F-Rating also has a strong number of supporters within the film industry. Here's what some of the F-Rating allies have to say:

'The F-Rating is a superb and necessary benchmark. One that all films and filmmakers should aspire to meet'.

Amma Asante, director of A United Kingdom

'I am so glad that the F-Rating exists. We desperately need to shine a light on the issue of the lack of women in film [...] Holly Tarquini has become a vital spokesperson in our industry representing all of us women filmmakers!' Sarah Gavron, director of Suffragette

The F-Rating is currently being used by over 60 film festivals, cinemas and film societies across the UK. Organisations also campaigning for women in film are great supporters of the rating, they include: the AHRC-funded research project Calling the Shots: Women and Contemporary Film Culture in the UK, The Bechdel Test Fest, Directors UK and Women in Film and TV (UK).

WHY SHOULD YOU USE THE F-RATING?

The F-Rating is a simple and effective tool that film exhibitors and programmers can use to highlight films made by and about women.

Since films with women at the helm have significantly less spent on promotion, they can be much harder for audiences to see. Cinemas, film festivals and film societies who adopt the rating are given access to a database of upcoming F-Rated titles to help them select great, recent films made by and about women.

The F-Rating gives filmgoers an easily identifiable label that highlights women both on screen and behind the camera. The rating also helps to support and promote the amazing work that women are doing in film

and redresses the imbalance within the industry - helping women in film to gain the recognition that they deserve.

The F-Rating also helps promote a more realistic representation of 50% of the population on screen, and furthers the ongoing campaign for gender equality in the film industry. In turn, by using the F-Rating exhibitors and audiences can help to persuade studios to fund more female filmmakers.

THE F-RATING IN ACTION

How will using the F-Rating affect your film programme? Here are just some of the fantastic comments from organisations who have chosen to F-Rate their film programmes:

'The F-Rating is leading the charge across the frontiers of cinema's male-dominated landscape. There are some exciting new voices breaking through: please don't be leave your audiences behind!'

Joanna Crow, Panache Picture House Pop-up Cinema, F-Rating since 2014

'What we have found most positive about adopting the F-Rating is that it has started so many conversations with customers [...] it creates some brilliant debates about representation in cinema - not just around gender but also around sexuality, race, politics and everything in between. We have found it to be a great hook to hang ticket offers on so people are encouraged to come to multiple films. We have had many comments from both men and women saying how they have been inspired to see more F-Rated films and their shock at just how much of a minority that women are in the film industry [...] the more of us who use it [the F-Rating], the more we can stand up for women in film and make it a standardised rating.'

Anna Navas and Charlotte McGuinness, Plymouth Arts Centre (pictured), F-Rating since 2016

'The F-Rating is a really easy way to show you're an inclusive, forward-looking organisation which screens films with women at their heart. It's good for everyone!'

Nuala O'Sullivan, Women Over 50 Film Festival, F-Rating since 2017

And from audience members:

'Plymouth Arts Centre and the new F-Ratings have inspired me to recently watch Prevenge, Certain Women, Aquarius, The Beguiled and the outstanding Wonder Woman. It's been wonderful and life-changing to see movies with women at the front and centre, driving the narrative.'

'Your films and the F-Rating at your cinema have inspired me to apply for an MA in literature and I'm going to specialise in women and cinema.'

We surveyed the organisations who are F-Rating their programme and got a magnificent 100% approval: every single respondent said that they would recommend the F-Rating to other exhibitors. This clearly demonstrates the positive impact that the F-Rating has had on the programmes of many film festivals, cinemas and film societies – and this could affect your organisation too.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The more exhibitors who F-Rate their programme, and the more familiar audiences become with the symbol, the more likely it is that studios will fund female helmed projects and distributors will get behind films made by and about women.

Using the F-Rating has the additional benefit of attracting new audiences, giving filmgoers the chance to see something new and amplifying the work that women in the film industry are doing, and it frequently attracts press attention.

If you would like to F-Rate your programme, it's easy and free to join the movement: just email hello@filmbath.org.uk with your details. Then, use the F-Rated icon alongside standard age ratings for the selected films on your website and other programming materials.

You will receive a range of marketing materials to help you promote the F-Rating, including:

- A jpeg and png file of the F-Rated icon to apply to your digital and print content
- A list of upcoming F-Rated titles
- Cheat sheets so that staff can explain the F-Rating to colleagues and audience members
- Blurb about the rating which you can adapt for your audience
- Examples of how the F-Rating is used in other organisations and venues
- You will be added to the F-Rated [“We F-Rate”](#) page PLUS the F-Rating will help to promote your events on their social media

WANT TO CARRY ON THE CONVERSATION ABOUT WOMEN IN FILM? HERE'S HOW:

- Follow the F-Rating on [Twitter](#) and Facebook
- Spread the word: pledge your support on social media and post about the F-Rating using hashtags
- Ask film festivals and your local cinema to use the F-Rating
- Watch F-Rated films: search for 'F-Rated' on IMDb, see more F-Rated films and help to further support women in film
- Check out the [F-Rated website](#) for more information on F-Rated films, news and more

Join the F-Rating, and become part of a movement that helps to end gender inequality within the film industry.

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1. Center for the Study of Women In Television & Film, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/jan/12/female-directors-on-decline-in-hollywood-study>
 2. University of Southampton, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/comment/invisible-woman-film-gender-bias-laid-bare>
 3. Directors UK, <https://www.directors.uk.com/campaigns/gender-equality-in-uk-film-industry>
 4. Directors UK, <https://www.directors.uk.com/campaigns/gender-equality-in-uk-film-industry>
 5. BFI, <https://filmography.bfi.org.uk/>
 6. Geena Davis Institute on Gender In Media, <https://seejane.org/research-informs-empowers/data/>
 7. University of Southampton, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/comment/invisible-woman-film-gender-bias-laid-bare>