

BACKGROUND

Hidden Figures is the incredible untold story of Katherine Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), Dorothy Vaughn (Octavia Spencer) and Mary Jackson (Janelle Monae)—brilliant African-American women working at NASA, who served as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation's confidence, turned around the Space Race, and galvanized the world. The visionary trio crossed all gender and race lines to inspire generations to dream big.

**WHAT THE CRITICS SAY**

'The genius of Theodore Melfi's film is not in the originality of the script – as far as prestige pictures go, its dramatic and comedic beats are easy to anticipate – but in the novelty of the story and the liveliness of the performances. Each leading lady gets her own arc, though we mostly stick with Katherine, a brilliant mathematician and mother of three with excellent cat-eye glasses, who must brush off everyday office racism in order to prove herself to her stern but otherwise tolerant boss Al Harrison (Kevin Costner). This is Henson's film, though the supporting cast are uniformly excellent, in particular Moonlight's Mahershala Ali as Katherine's dashing love interest, a gentle, serious man impressed and only a little intimidated by her intelligence'

Simran Hans

'Watching this particular story unfurl on the big screen, it's hard not to think of how many more movies and books could be made about women like Katherine Johnson—talented women shut out of promotions and meetings and elite programs and institutions and, thus history, because they weren't white. Even today, barriers remain. A 2015 study found 100 percent of women of color in STEM fields report experiencing gender bias at work, an effect often influenced by their race. Black and Latina women, for example, reported being mistaken for janitors (a scene that, fittingly, takes place in Hidden Figures). With the complex social forces that shaped its characters' lives still so relevant today, Hidden Figures is powerful precisely because it's not a solo portrait or a close character study. Certainly, Hollywood will be a better industry when there are more films about the egos and personal demons and grand triumphs of black women who helped to change the world. But Hidden Figures shines with respect for sisterhood and the communistic spirit, and in casting its spotlight wide, the film imparts a profound appreciation for what was achieved in history's shadows.'

The Atlantic

BLOGS, PODCASTS AND ARTICLES**PODCASTS**

Podcasts are a great free resource allowing you to listen to interview, reviews and opinions surrounding a whole range of films. They are available from a number of different providers on your phone (iTunes or the podcast app) or via Soundcloud on the web. For this particular film have a listen to:

- **All Things Considered: 'Hidden Figures': How Black Women Did The Math That Put Men On The Moon (25/09/2016)**

<http://www.npr.org/2016/09/25/495179824/hidden-figures-how-black-women-did-the-math-that-put-men-on-the-moon>

- **Women and Hollywood: Podcast with “Hidden Figures” Screenwriter Allison Schroeder (23/12/2016)**

<https://blog.womenandhollywood.com/listen-podcast-with-hidden-figures-screenwriter-allison-schroeder-8efdf623d3f>

ARTICLES/BLOGS

For a little bit more information about the film, the imagery and the context surrounding it you might also want to have a look at the following short articles and blogs:

- **Hidden Figures: Style And Grace In The Race For Space (Annabel Sowemimo):**

<http://www.gal-dem.com/hidden-figures-review/>

- **NASA's Real 'Hidden Figures':**

<https://www.space.com/35430-real-hidden-figures.html>

RECOMMENDED FURTHER WATCHING

Step, Amanda Lipitz

Step tells the uplifting story of an all-girl dance team in a Baltimore school overcoming boundaries and empowering themselves, ultimately allowing them to achieve their dreams of winning the championship and being accepted into college.

Loving, Jeff Nichols

Loving recounts the true story of Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter. Richard, a white construction worker, falls in love with Mildred, a black family friend. After a turbulent relationship, their case eventually paved the way for the US Supreme Court to outlaw the prohibition of interracial marriage. *Loving* appeared on many critics' end of year lists and gained widespread acclaim for the two lead performances.

The Right Stuff, Philip Kaufman

Like *Hidden Figures*, *The Right Stuff* is a true story of certain individuals' contributions to the space race. It tells the complex story of the first manned spaceflight by the United States, and explores the impact upon the people involved. Epic in scope, the film straddles the line between American blockbuster and experimental art-house film.

Freedom Riders, Stanley Nelson

Freedom Riders was the name given to a group of both black and white activists who campaigned against racial segregation laws by riding buses into pro-segregation southern states. The film of the same name is an award-winning documentary charting these important protester's activities and the impact they had on the US Civil Rights movement.

