

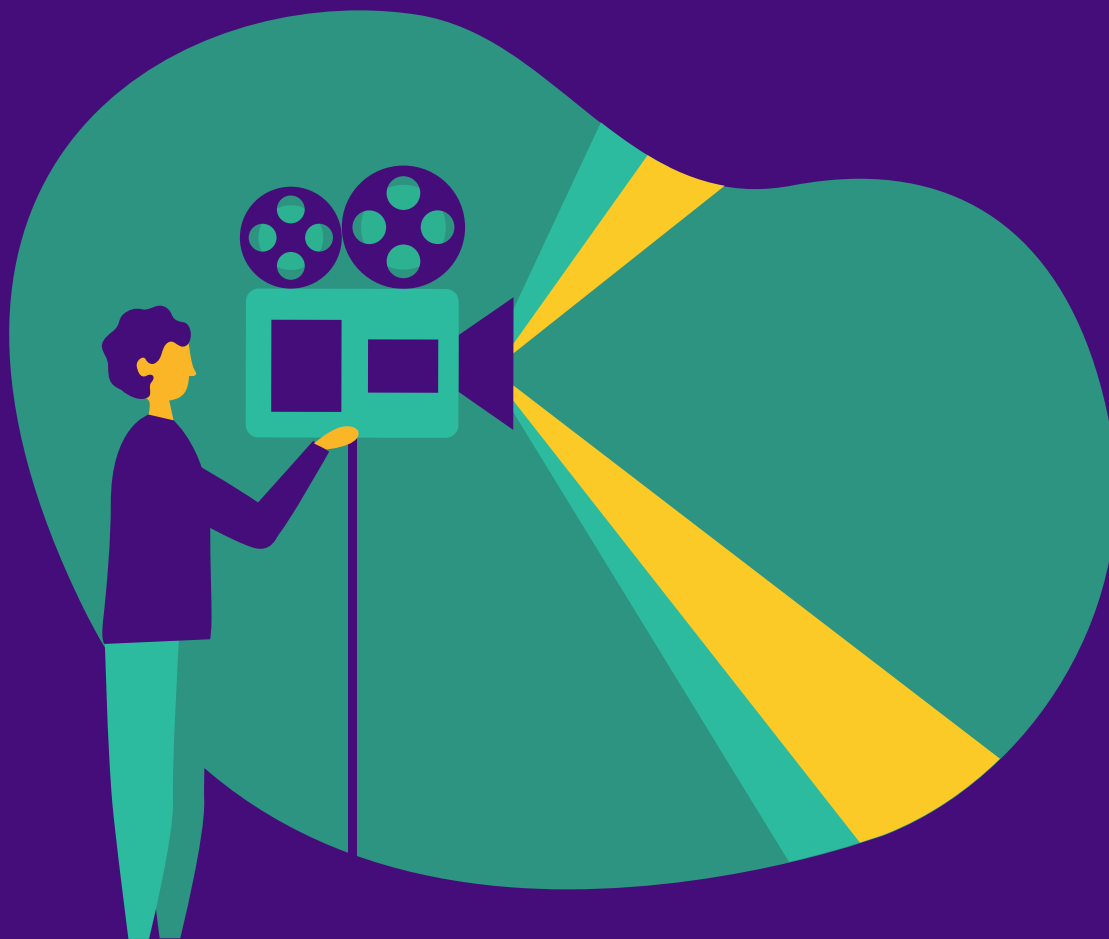
איגוד
הבמאיות
והבמאים



AdvaCenter مرکز أديفا
מרכז אדוה
מידע על שוויון וצדק חברתי בישראל



FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG



February
2021

THE CELLULOID CEILING

A Gender-Based Analysis of The Israeli Film Industry

Lior Elefant, Ety Konor-Attias, Yael Hasson & Noga Dagan-Buzaglo



www.adva.org
contact@adva.org

Board of Directors

Prof. Yossi Dahan, Chair
Ms. Gilberte Finkel, Treasurer
Prof. Ismael Abu-Saad
Prof. Nitza Berkovitch
Prof. Oren Yiftachel
Prof. Yossi Yona
Prof. Shoshana Madmoni-Gerber
Prof. Rivka Savaiya
Prof. Dani Filc
Prof. Rachel Kallus
Prof. Uri Ram
Advocate Ola Shtiwee
Prof. Hubert Law-Yone, emeritus

Audit Committee

Ms. Ruti Gur
Ms. Hedva Isachar

Staff Members

Dr. Yuval Livnat, Executive Director
Barbara Swirski, Community Relations
Dr. Shlomo Swirski, Academic Director
Etty Konor-Attias, Research Coordinator
Dr. Yael Hasson, Head of Gender Research
Atty. Noga Dagan Buzaglo, Researcher
Dr. Valeria Seigelshifer, Coordinator of Gender Equality Projects
Yaron Hoffmann-Dishon, Researcher
Uriya Yakut Zini, Outreach and Community Action Coordinator
Aviv Lieberman, Researcher
Mira Oppenheim, Office Manager / Media Relations
Lital Biton, Creative and Graphic Artist
Efrat Ya'ari, Resource Development



The Directors' Guild's Chairwoman:

Limor Pinhasov

Head of Original Work Promotions (CEO) at the Directors' Guild:

Roei Elba



Resident Representative: Dr. Paul Pasch
Project Manager: Judith Stelmach

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

The commercial use of media published by FES without written permission by FES is strictly forbidden.

Adva Center Would like to thank The New Israel Fund for its ongoing support

I SBN 978-965-92896-0-8



All rights reserved to Adva Center and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Lior Elefant is a Ph.D. candidate at the Sociology and Anthropology department, Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Her research, supervised by Prof. Nitza Berkovich, deals with gender inequality in the Israeli film industry.

Translated by: Sivan Gal Boico

Graphic Design: Lital Biton

Illustrations are based on designs by:
gstudioimagen, Freepik
pch.vector, Freepik
macrovector, Freepik
Freepik

Our sincere thanks go to **Anat Mozes** – Head of Promotion and Marketing (CEO) at The Israeli Documentary Forum, **Hagit Ben Yaakov** – Chairwoman of The Israeli Documentary Forum **Limor Pinhasov**, the Directors' Guild's Chairwoman and **Roei Elba** – Head of Original Work Promotions (CEO) at the Directors' Guild, for their helpful comments and support.

Our thanks also go to **Marlyn Vinig, Rana Abu Fraiha,** and **Dr. Merav Alush Levron** for their writing on Orthodox women filmmakers, Palestinian women filmmakers, and Mizrahi women filmmakers, respectively.

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Main Findings	8
Research Method	10
Students' Graduation Films	13
Debut Narrative Films	18
Full-Length Narrative Features	22
Gender-Based Analysis of Public Funding Grants: The Israel Film Fund and the Rabinovich Foundation	32
The Ophir Awards and The Israeli Documentary Film Competition	39
Data from Professional Unions	53
Reasons for the Gender-Based Occupational Segregation in the Israeli Film Industry	55
Diversity of Israeli Women Filmmakers	62
■ Mizrahi Women Filmmakers	64
■ Jewish Orthodox Women Filmmakers	72
■ Israeli Citizens' Palestinian Women Filmmakers	74
■ Israeli LGBTQ Filmmakers	77
Recommendations	80
Bibliography	83
Appendix	86

INTRODUCTION

This report examines the Israeli film industry from the perspective of gender.

Over the past twenty years, there has been a growing involvement of women in the Israeli film industry. Since the establishment of Israel and up until the year 2000, women directed a mere 7% of screened Israeli narrative features. However, as shown in this report, over the last two decades this gap has been growing smaller, and the ratio of films directed by women between 2013 and 2018 stands at 21%. With that said, the positive change in the growing numbers of female-directed narrative features is not reflected in some of the film-related professions, and the gender-inequality within the Israeli film industry is still quite large. In recent years, a few reports and research papers have examined the evident gender-inequality in the allocation of budgets as well as in the gender-biased division of labor in the film industry of the Western-world. However, such research regarding the Israeli film industry hasn't been published to date.¹ This report joins existing research, allowing a comparison between gender-related aspects of the Israeli film industry and equivalent industries worldwide.

The interest in examining the role of women rises, amongst other reasons, from the connection between the filmmakers to the types of content we are exposed to on screen (the artwork). The presence and absence of women from key roles in the film industry impact the types of narratives, topics, characters, and points of view presented on screen. The contents and representations we are exposed to have a tremendous significance in building our personal as well as our social identity and in shaping the reality around us; their importance cannot be overstated – especially in a world dominated by screens.

¹ Apart from this report, there are a number of scholars who explore these issues, all of them are also filmmakers: **Smadar Zamir** is examining the gender-based inequality inherent in the types of contents that are produced, and in the narrative feature directing category, and even made a documentary film about it. **Israela Shaer-Meoded** explores early Israeli women's cinema, and through her research has discovered the first woman who directed a narrative feature in Israel. **Marlyn Vinig**, filmmaker and scholar, explores the Orthodox cinema. This report includes her overview of the Orthodox women filmmakers and their works.

The report is presented in a way which reflects a certain chronology of the development of a cinematic career, beginning with students' graduation films, through debut narrative features to full-length narrative features.

We will examine women's presence in key roles when making full-length narrative features and take a closer look at these five key roles - scriptwriting, directing, production, cinematography, and editing. We will also look at publicly funded students' graduation films; the available resources of public funding granted to women and men filmmakers between 2013-2018 through the analysis of the overall grant applications and grants allocated to filmmakers by Israel's two major film funds, and their support of full-length narrative features - **The Israel Film Fund** and **The Rabinovich Foundation – Israel Cinema Project**.² It is important to mention that this report only examines the two funds specified, and not the entire pool of public funding sources.

We will conduct a gender-based analysis of the Israeli Academy of Film and Television Awards - **Ophir Awards**,³ and **Israeli Documentary Film Competition** as a reflection of the local filmmaking industry in terms of cinematic yield, professional recognition, and publicity. Lastly, we will present information regarding women filmmakers from social minority groups as well as recommendations for a gender-based analysis and the means by which to strengthen women in the film industry.

With the exception of the students' graduation films, the Ophir Awards and the Israeli Documentary Film Competition, this report only examines the processes of making full-length narrative features screened across Israeli cinemas. The reason is that the sources this report draws on regarding documentary films are incomplete, mainly due to the fact that documentary films get far less screenings in mainstream cinemas.

2 Will be referred to as the Rabinovich Foundation.

3 The Israeli Academy of Film and Television Awards is the Israeli equivalent of the American Oscars, the French César, and similar awards worldwide.

**THE PRESENCE AND
ABSENCE OF WOMEN FROM
KEY ROLES IN THE FILM
INDUSTRY IMPACT THE
TYPES OF NARRATIVES,
TOPICS, CHARACTERS,
AND POINTS OF VIEW
PRESENTED ON SCREEN.**



MAIN FINDINGS

A gender balance during film school years

In Israel, as is the case in many other Western countries, a gender balance is achieved during film school years. This balance is reflected both in the role division (on and off set) in the process of making graduation films, as well as in the way that these films get publicly funded. Once graduating and entering the film industry, female representation in each of the main key roles drops significantly.

A gender-based role division according to professions and type of work

In the film industry, much like in the general labor market, a gender-based role division according to professions and type of work is clearly evident. This can be deduced from integrating the information on narrative feature filmmakers as well as information on Ophir Awards nominees and winners, and the Israeli Documentary Film Competition winners. In the main key roles of the film industry – directing, scriptwriting, production and cinematography, there is a clear male majority. So is the case with sound design and art. In professions such as makeup, costume design and casting, however, a female majority is clearly evident.

The gender-biased division of labor also affects the categories of films made, as well as their length

The gender-biased division of labor in the film industry also affects the categories of films made, as well as their length. There is a clear male majority in the creation of full-length narrative features, where budgets are higher than ILS 1,000,000 per film, whilst a clear female majority can be found in the short narrative and documentary categories, with average budgets ranging between ILS 150,000-200,000 per film. Particularly evident is the female domination in the short documentary category, where women account for two thirds to three quarters of the Ophir Awards winners. Similar numbers came up from the analysis of the Israeli Documentary Film Competition. Thus, it can be argued that short documentaries are a distinct female niche within the Israeli film industry.

The reasons for this gender-biased division of labor

The reasons found for this gender-biased division of labor are: work environment and employment ethics which make it hard to integrate family life into an active filmmaking career; gender-biased stereotypes; lack of female role models, as is the case in the general labor market, alongside characteristics which are unique to the film industry: higher exposure to sexual harassment; content gatekeepers: in the world of mainstream cinema, the masculine narrative is still very much the norm and men's stories are far more likely to be perceived as universal, whilst women's stories are still perceived as a cinematic niche.

Support given by public film funds

When looking at the issue from the perspective of support given by public film funds, the main finding is the incredibly low ratio of female directors who apply for funding (20%); accordingly, so is their share in the total support granted.

When the director is a woman, the number of women who staff one of the key roles – scriptwriting, production, cinematography, and editing – is higher

Examining the presence of women in key roles within filmmaking processes shows that when the director is a woman, or when a film is co-directed by a man and a woman, the number of women who staff one of the key roles – scriptwriting, production, cinematography, and editing – is high. Thus, in 74% of films directed by women, the majority of key roles were staffed by women, and in another 10% a gender balance was achieved within the key categories (the remaining 10% lacked women in key roles). The data presented couldn't point at causality, but what is clear is that supporting women directors is meaningful and holds the potential to increase the number of women represented in all of the key production roles.

Recommendations regarding how to promote gender equality within the film industry are presented at the end of the report.

RESEARCH METHOD

This report was inspired by similar research papers on the topic of gender inequality in the film industry, published in recent years across the Western world. **Martha Lauzen** (Lauzen, 1998) was one of the first researchers to examine the presence of women in the American film industry.⁴ Inspired by research papers on the topic of women in the general workforce, Lauzen was also the first to coin the term **'The Celluloid Ceiling'**, meaning the types of obstacles and barriers women face in their professional progress within the film industry, and how particular they are to this specific industry. Unlike the invisible, transparent glass ceiling, this celluloid-made barrier is visible to all (Uğur Tanrıöver, 2017).

Lauzen's work method is quite popular today, and there are many research institutions worldwide that use her quantitative research methods to analyze the presence of women in the various roles at local film industries (Danard, 2018; EWA, 2014; Follows, Kreager, & Gomes, 2016). This is the first Israeli report to have used this method. The method is based on an analysis of movies produced annually, budgets, industry recognition, and identification of women who work in the key production roles of scriptwriting, directing, production, cinematography, and editing. It's important to note that most of the research published in Europe and America in recent years examines the role of the director only. However, this report wishes to challenge the notion that directing is the only key role, mainly due to the fact that cinematic creation is a teamwork creation, and the film industry isn't made up of directors only.

Methodology

The analysis presented in this report relies on a quantitative research method, inspired by Lauzen and others. Most of the data in this document is taken from **Pilat** reports; reports of the Center for Cultural Research and Information, which, between 1999-2016, was placed in charge of analyzing the Film Board budget on behalf of **The**

⁴ See the explanation provided on the website of the Research Institute founded by Lauzen, [Center for the Study of Women in Television & Film](#).

Ministry of Culture and Sports. Since 2017 to date, this responsibility is in the hands of **Edusystems**. The reports are fully accessible to the public, published annually⁵ and can be accessed via the company's website.⁶ The information published in the report includes the number of funds-supported films produced annually, box office numbers, Cinematheques' activities, feature films screened on TV, Israeli film festivals, film crews, etc. It is important to note that these reports refer only to films that were supported by publicly funded film funds. The few films that were independently produced (with no public funding and/or support) are not included in these reports or in this one. The information gathered in the report predominantly refers to Israeli narrative feature films, since the information which can be obtained regarding documentary films is very partial.

It is important to note that the information gathered in **Pilat's** and **Edusystems'** reports was incomplete. In order to complete the missing information on budgets and submissions, more information was gathered from the film funds' websites.⁷ Additionally, the reports and information presented at the funds' websites are not gender-segmented, so in order to complete this report, a thorough research was carried out to locate the names of all filmmakers (women and men) in order to get the full picture. Extra research was also needed to complete some of the information regarding budgets and film crews for some of the films. These types of challenges are similar to challenges experienced by researchers when studying gender inequality in the British film industry (Wreford & Cobb, 2017). The present report's recommendations also touch on the lack of information in the existing reports.

In order to examine trends in the integration of women in the film industry, the data analysis in this current report examines five consecutive years: 2013-2018. And, since 2017 to date no reports on the subject have been published by the Ministry of Culture and the Film Board, the 2018 data was manually sourced from websites such as seret.co.il (Hebrew), and edb.co.il (Hebrew), as well as the relevant funds' websites. It is important to mention that since the amendment

5 The reports from 2018 and onwards have not been published to date.

6 [Edusystems Website](#).

7 [Israel Film Fund](#); [Rabinovich Foundation](#).

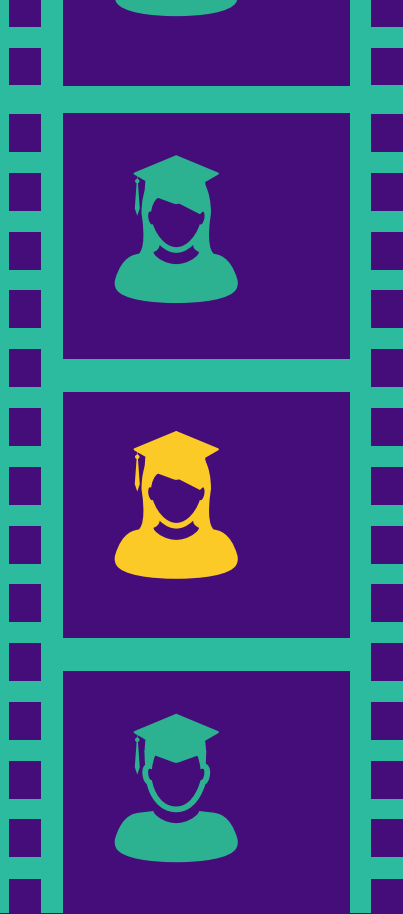
to **The Cinema Law**⁸ and the support assessments, which came into effect in 2018, several regional film funds were established, including the **Galil Film Fund**, the **Darom Film Fund**, and the **Judea and Samaria Film Fund**. These funds are not included in this report since they only became fully operational this year (2020).⁹

The analysis of the allocation of The Ophir Awards and The Israeli Documentary Film Competition Awards spans even longer periods of time: 1999–2018 and 2010–2019, respectively, based on the information published on The Israeli Academy of Film and Television (Hebrew), as well as The Israeli Documentary Forum (Hebrew).

Due to methodological difficulties in the gathering of the information, there may be minor errors and deviations in the information presented in the report. These errors, if they exist, concern only a few films and do not affect the overall picture. For these reasons, the following analysis may be viewed as a pointer to the major trends in the film industry's gender-based role division.

8 The Cinema Law was enacted in 1999, to regulate the country's annual film budget, amongst other things.

9 This document only examines public film funds operating under the Israeli Cinema Law. In addition to these funds, there are a number of private funds and one more significant public fund – The Jerusalem Film and Television Fund; however, this fund does not receive its budget allocation from the Ministry of Culture and Sports.



PART #1

STUDENTS' GRADUATION FILMS

The number of film schools in Israel has grown significantly in recent years, and now totals 18 higher-education film schools nationwide. Film schools serve as a hotbed for cinematic creation, and many of the nation's renowned filmmakers began their creation process during the course of their studies. The country's main film schools include (in Alphabetical order): **Hamidrasha – the School of Art; Ma'aleh – School of Television, Film and the Arts; Minshar for Art; The Sam Spiegel Film and Television School; Sapir College – Cinema and TV Arts; The Steve Tisch School of Film and Television.**

These schools teach the main filmmaking professions – directing, scriptwriting, cinematography, editing and production.¹⁰ Other professions are taught in vocational schools such as **Yarin Shahaf**, which focuses on the makeup artistry. There are no dedicated vocational institutions for costume design, set design or casting, but there are schools which provide vocational training or specific courses for these areas – especially in the form of practical workshops.

Students' graduation films reflect the outcomes of their study. They are traditionally created in the students' final year, when each student is expected to partake in another student's graduation film voluntarily, whilst being professionally accompanied in the creation process by the school staff or by guest industry professionals. Students also enjoy technical support, access to filming equipment, as well as support staff and sometimes even production grants, which are awarded at the discretion of each school. Graduation films are by definition short, and often get made on significantly lower budgets than full-length narrative features or documentaries. Such conditions allow for the creation of many films simultaneously, whilst also encouraging the students to engage in teamwork. In most film schools, the prerequisite for attaining their graduation diploma (or university degree) is the completion of a graduation film. That said, the students are not obligated to direct their own film; their only obligation is to take on at least one technical crew role in the making of a graduation film, be it theirs or their peers'. The Incubator-like conditions students enjoy during the course of their studies may explain the high number of graduating filmmakers.








Public film funds which support students' graduation films include: **The Rabinovich Foundation, Gesher Multicultural Film Fund, The New Fund for Cinema and TV,**

¹⁰ Excluding the Sam Spiegel School of Film and Television, no other film schools, faculties or departments have a designated production studies department.

and **Makor Foundation**. The average support grants range between ILS 5,000-20,000, and are given according to the fund's discretion.¹¹

The following table details graduating students' films at the various film schools nationwide who completed their studies between 2012-2017, directed their own films and received funding from one of the major film funds outlined above.¹²

Table1: Students' Graduation Films, by Gender, 2012-2017

Year	Number of Graduating Students Who Directed Their Own Films	Number of Women Student Directors	Number of Men Student Directors	Percentage of Women Student Directors
2012	49	22	27	45% 
2013	67	38	29	57% 
2014	95	46	49	48% 
2015	105	45	60	43% 
2016	109	57	52	52% 
2017	102	54	48	53% 
Total	527	262	265	50% 

The numbers presented in the table above show that on average, women constitute half of the graduating students whose films enjoy public funding. It can also be seen that, during the significant period of film studies, which serves as the basis for the students' future career in the film industry, there are hardly any gender-based differences between male and female directors. But, as we will see later in the report, the number of active directors drops significantly

11 For example, in 2017, Geshar Multicultural Film Fund supported 28 students' films with an overall budget of ILS 461,000, with an average of ILS 16,464 per film; the Rabinovich Foundation supported 16 films that same year with an overall investment of ILS 280,000, and an average of ILS 17,500 per film; the New Fund for Cinema and TV supported 28 films that year, with an average of ILS 10,000 per film.

12 It is possible that not all graduation films receive support grants from the various film funds. However, we can only collect information regarding the films that are supported. Further research is necessary to discover the overall number of graduation films from Israel's various film schools and faculties.

after graduation, whilst the number of female directors among them drops even more in comparison. That is, when talking about short films created by women who are generally speaking young and childless and create their films with the support of the school, women tend to direct as much as men. As we will show later, this changes significantly when we talk about market conditions.

These findings resemble the findings of the research done in other countries: a comparative research looking into seven European countries conducted in 2016¹³ showed that, whilst gender equality had been achieved among film schools' graduates, there is a significant lack in representation of women at later stages of their career in the film industry (Aylett, 2016).¹⁴ A similar study conducted in Germany shows that despite the fact that graduating female students comprise 50%, the number of women in key roles in the German filmmaking industry then drops to 20% (Loist & Prommer, 2019).

13 Austria, Croatia, France, England, Germany, Italy and Sweden.

14 It should be noted that the research did not examine graduation films but the ratio of graduating students. Examining the gender of the graduating directors gives a more precise analysis that further helps to understand the types of career barriers women face. The European data gathered, however, provides insights about progress made in the field.

During the significant period of film studies, which serves as the basis for the students' future career in the film industry, there are hardly any gender-based differences between male and female directors. But the number of active directors drops significantly after graduation, whilst the number of female directors among them drops even more in comparison.



PART #2

DEBUT NARRATIVE FEATURE FILMS

In order to present a fuller picture of film-related careers from a gender perspective, this report includes an analysis of the number of debut feature films between 2013 and 2018 created by both women and men directors, who received the support of Israeli public film funds. For the purposes of this document, a debut film is defined as the first feature film made by the director, but not necessarily the first to be made by any other key-role team member.¹⁵ From the information we gathered, it is evident that the majority of debut feature films are made by film school graduates, but this is not a prerequisite. Some of the film funds, the Israel Film Fund for instance, support debut feature films via a separate submission track; however, the grants are significantly lower than the main submissions track.¹⁶

Between 2013–2018, 107 debut feature films enjoyed the public film funds' support: 74 films by male directors vs. 33 films by female directors. On average, a little under a third (31%) were created by female directors.

The number of women who directed their debut feature film was low in comparison to men, in almost every year examined in this report. Exceptions to the rule were 2014 and 2016, in which the number of female directors was nearly the same as that of male directors. The number of female directors was particularly low in 2013 (four female and 15 male directors), 2017 (four female and 13 male directors), and finally 2018, which saw only two women direct their debut feature films, compared with 16 men.

It is interesting to look at the later stages in the careers of both men and women directors, by looking at the films they made after their debut feature films. The information gathered shows that between 2013 and 2018, only eight directors – seven men and one woman – made their second films. So, the number of directors who continue to direct after their first film is very low, and from those who do continue, the number of women directors is exceptionally low. It is important to note that the process of making a feature film is incredibly long and often takes much longer than a year, which could explain the general lack of creative continuity during the years examined.¹⁷

15 For example, a woman scriptwriter's first film, which was directed by a woman who had already directed a full-length narrative feature, isn't considered in this document to be a debut film. This is also the case with festivals and other screening events.

16 The Israel Film Fund invests up to ILS 1,000,000 in the Debut Films Track, and up to ILS 2,000,000 in the Main Submission Track. It is important to note that the Israel Film Fund, the Israeli Documentary Film Competition and a number of international film festivals treat both the first and the second film as debut films. This report, however, refers to the first film only as a debut film.

17 Twelve male directors and two female directors directed two films, five male directors directed three films, and one male director directed four films.

Between 2013-2018,
107 debut feature films
enjoyed the public film
funds' support



**74 films by male
directors (69%)**








VS.

**33 films by female
directors (31%)**



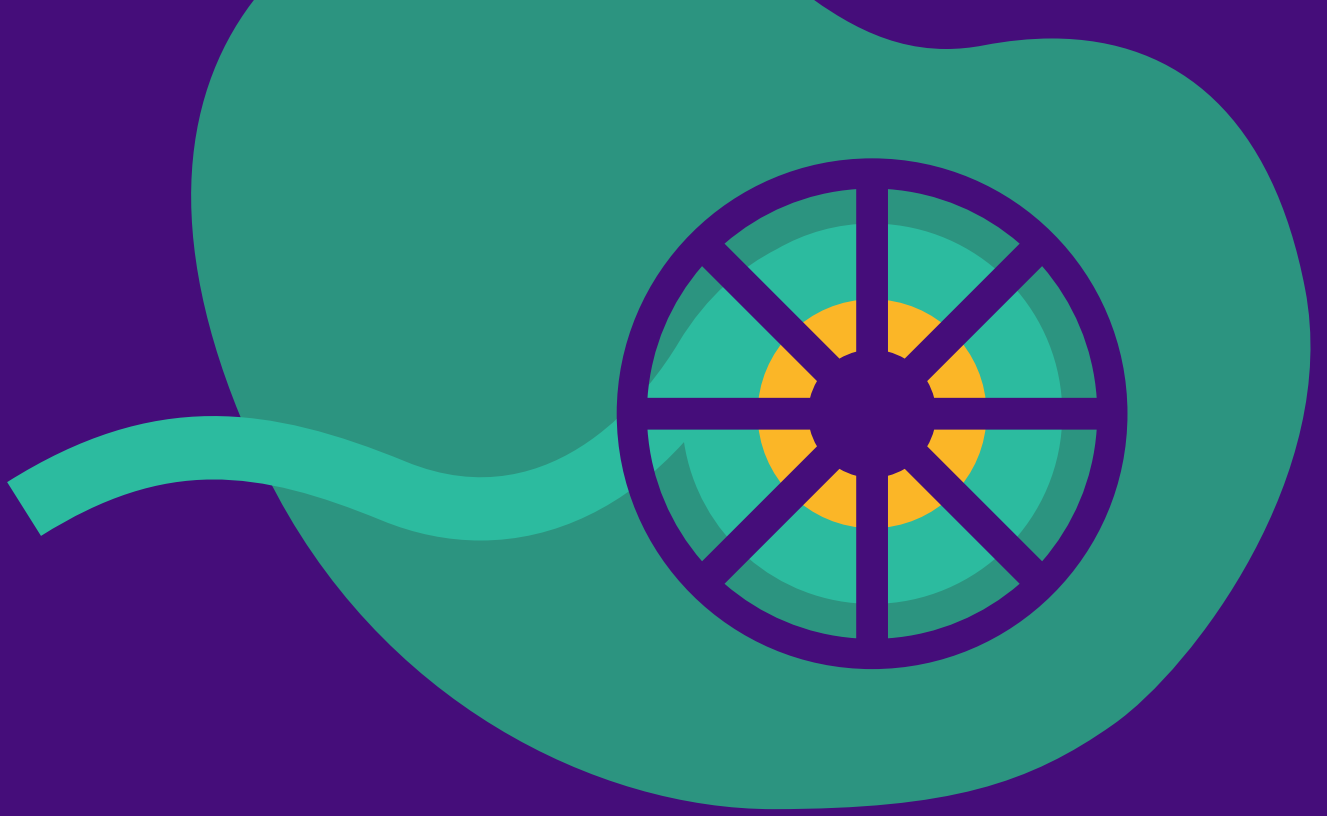
These findings are consistent with findings gathered in a study of the Hollywood film industry. The study, which examined one thousand films screened in the United States between 2007 and 2016, showed that women’s directing career is shorter than men’s, and that more women than men tend to direct one film only. During the ten years examined in the research, 80% of the women directed one film, as opposed to 55% of the men. Moreover, 23% of the men directed three or more films as opposed to 6% of the women (Smith et al., 2017).

Table 2: Gender-Based Breakdown of Public Funds’ Supported Debut Feature Films between 2013-2018

Year	Total Debut Feature Films	Total Number of Filmmakers	Out of Which:		Percentage of Women Directors
			Women Directors	Men Directors	
2013	19	19	4	15	21% 
2014 ¹	11	11	5	6	45% 
2015 ²	21	23	9	14	39% 
2016 ³	18	19	9	10	47% 
2017 ⁴	17	17	4	13	24% 
2018 ⁵	16	18	2	16	11% 
Total	102	107	33	74	31% 

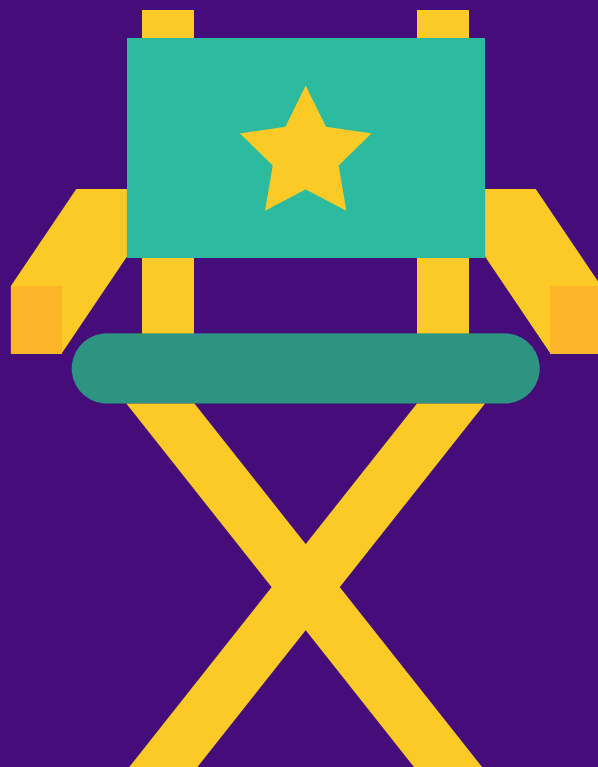
Notes:

- (1) One of the debut feature films this year was co-directed by a man and a woman. For the woman it was her first experience as a director of a full-length narrative feature.
- (2) Two debut feature films this year were directed by two men and two women - their first directing experience of a feature film. Hence the difference in the numbers presented.
- (3) One debut feature film was directed by two men and was a first-time directing experience of a feature film for both of them.
- (4) This year, one feature film was directed by two women; for one of them it was her first directing experience of a feature film, the other one directed a feature previously. The director was counted in the debut female directors’ count, and so was the film.
- (5) In this year, two films were directed by two male directors; it was the first directing experience of a feature film for both of them. Two films were created by two male directors – for one of them it was his first directing experience of a feature film. Both the films and the directors were counted in the films’ and the directors’ counts.



PART #3

NARRATIVE FEATURE FILMS



In recent years, roughly thirty feature films are produced and screened in Israel annually. These films are screened in cinemas, local and international film festivals, Cinematheques and other special screenings. The vast majority of these films are funded by Israel's major film funds, whose budgets are awarded in accordance with the Cinema Law and in-fund support assessments, which determine the scope of the budget awarded to each film. The country's annual cinema budget, which totaled ILS 80,000,000 on average¹⁸ during the years examined in this report, is divided between the major film funds: the Israel Film Fund, Rabinovich Foundation, Gesher Multicultural Film Fund, The New Fund for Cinema and TV and Makor Foundation,¹⁹ as well as the various national cinematic bodies and affiliations such as Cinematheques, film festivals etc. The annual cinema budget and its distribution are fully disclosed to the public and can be found on the [Budget Key](#) website. Recent updates made to the support assessments require that the funds publish the data on their respective websites, and indeed much of the information can be found on the funds' websites – although not all of them make it as equally accessible.

Filmmaking involves many people in many and varied roles ranging from key roles such as directors, producers, scriptwriters, editors, cinematographers, to crew and on-set roles including casting, lighting, sound, costume design, makeup etc. In the next few pages we will present a gender-based breakdown of feature-films crews, in the various key roles.

Women in Key Roles in the Israeli Film Industry (Features)

Between 2013 and 2018, 200 Israeli full-length narrative features were premiered and screened nationwide in cinemas and/or local festivals.²⁰ The following tables outline the percentage of women and men who have taken key roles in the creation of the films: scriptwriting, directing, production, cinematography, and editing. It's important to mention that the vast majority of Israeli filmmakers **write and direct** their own films.²¹ In the following table each role was counted separately, even if the same man or woman took on a few roles simultaneously.

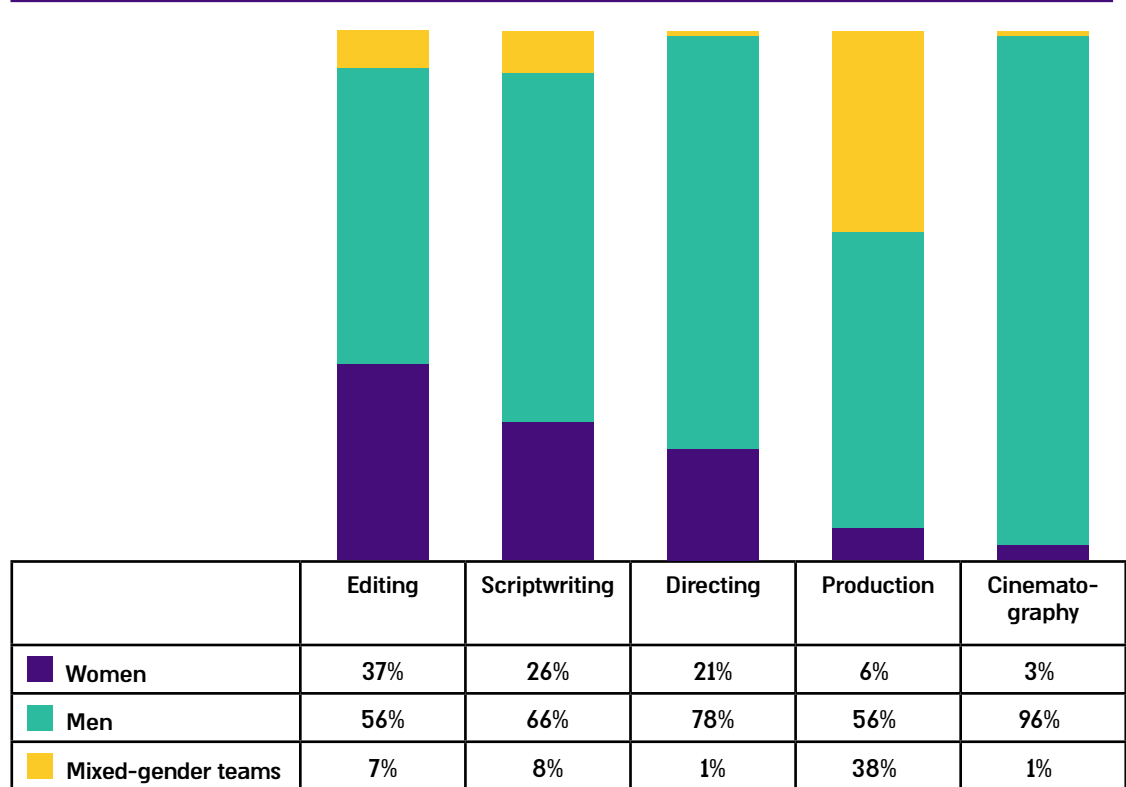
18 In the past two years, the budget has gone up by ILS 20,000,000, and currently stands at ILS 103,000,000 (The Ministry of Finance – Budgets Department October 15, 2018, reg. 7832-2018).

19 Up until 2018, as previously mentioned. In 2019 further regional film funds were set up.

20 We will mention again that the films included in this report have been supported by at least one public film fund.

21 160 out of the 200 films examined were written and directed by the same person/people, and only 43 films were written by co-writers.

Chart 1: Percentage of Men and Women Who Played a Key Role in the Making of a Feature Film between 2013-2018. In percentage, out of all films made (N=200), presented in descending order of the women’s roles.



Notes:

- (1) For women and men who co-worked on production (38%), percentage was calculated based on 199 feature films.
- (2) For women and men who co-worked on editing (7%), percentage was calculated based on 196 feature films.
- (3) For women and men who co-worked on cinematography (1%), percentage was calculated based on 196 feature films.

The chart above shows that in the making of the 200 feature films screened between 2013 and 2018, women were a clear minority in all key roles. This is also the case when we add women’s proportional share in each one of the key roles, when shared with men.

In the years examined, 26% of scripts were written by women, and 21% of directors were women. The percentage of women producers who produced alone was particularly low – only 6%; however 38% of the films were produced by mixed-gendered production companies. In other words, production is a distinct masculine profession, whilst women tend to take part in the production team

but not produce alone. It is worth mentioning that, in many cases, a man and a woman work together in one production company.²²

The highest percentage of women in key roles is in the field of editing – 37%. Possible explanations may be found in the nature of the editing work – either at the studio or from home, during relatively comfortable hours and in couples or small teams. It is also evident from the chart, that cinematography is a distinctively masculine profession. As far as cinematography goes, the percentage of women in the years examined in this report is negligible and comprises 3% (5 women only, compared to 189 men, whilst two films were shot by mixed-gender teams). Possible explanations may be that cinematography is perceived to be a heavy equipment lifting and operating profession, thus considered less suitable for women (which is not the case anymore, but this notion still prevails); stigmas attached to women who work in the field; the high level of intensity of the work; and difficulties women cinematographers experience when it comes to networking.²³

In the words of **Tova Asher**, a veteran film editor and director:

"It is the paving of the path towards motherhood, and the sanctity of raising a family, that prevents many talented women from engaging in many professional fields, cinema included. I don't think the tables have really been turned in that regard. It's true that today there are more women filmmakers who take on key roles but still, when looking at the overall picture, percentage wise, it is evident that there are no women cinematographers, but there are women editors since it's comfortable to handle in terms of family life. A woman who is an editor; can raise her children and still be an editor; for a woman cinematographer it's far more complicated. She needs to get up at 4am to work, so who will get up at 4am to feed the kids? The man?"²⁴

22 For example, **Lama Productions**, **Black Sheep Film Productions**, **Gum Films** – production houses run by a man and a woman together.

23 These reasons were mentioned by women cinematographers who partook in the conference "To Be a Female Professional in the Industry – Alone and Together", a joint initiative of the Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum and Act, held on March 8, 2019 at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque; as well as in interviews conducted with women cinematographers who in recent years set up the Women Cinematographers Forum as a response to the low numbers of women cinematographers in Israel.

24 The quote is taken from the film **In the Director's Chair Sits a Woman**, dir: **Smadar Zamir**, Prod: **Daroma Productions**, Israel, 2020.



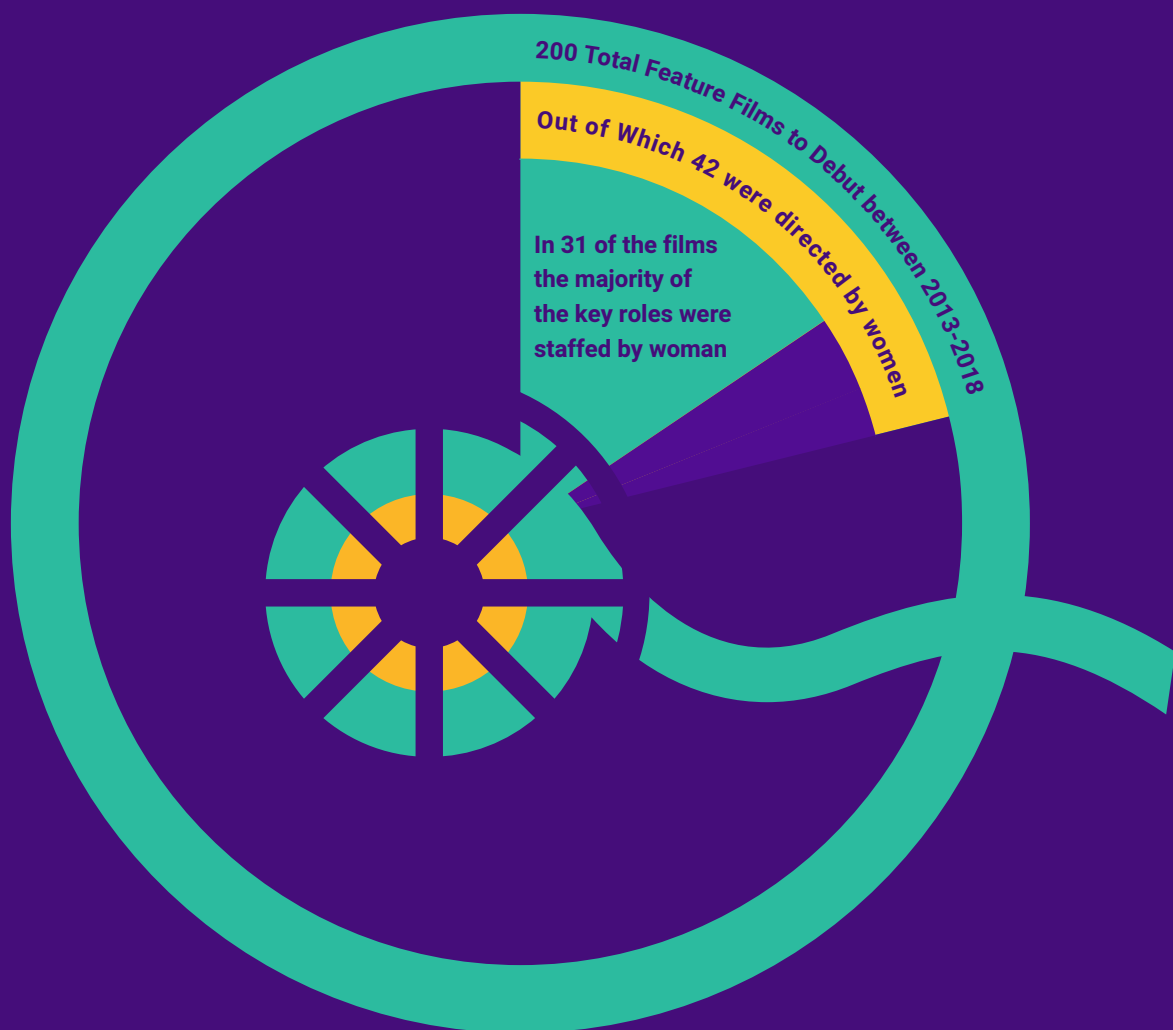
**FOR A WOMAN
CINEMATOGRAPHER IT'S
FAR MORE COMPLICATED.
SHE NEEDS TO GET UP AT
4am TO WORK, SO WHO
WILL GET UP AT 4am TO
FEED THE KIDS? THE MAN?**

- Tova Asher, a veteran film editor and director

The low percentage of women in key roles in the film industry is not unique to Israel. In recent years, a number of reports examining the roles of women in full-length narrative features in the first two decades of the millennium have been published (Aylett, 2016; Liddy, 2020; Screen Australia, 2015; Smith et al, 2017). From these reports, which focus on the role of the director, it is evident that:

- In **Europe**, between 2003 and 2017, women directed only 17% of the films; however, these numbers are on the rise (Liddy, 2020).
- In **Australia**, the numbers were similar and comprised 15% (Screen Australia, 2015).
- In **Hollywood** the numbers were the lowest – only 4% (Smith, et al).
- In the **German** film industry, only 9% of the films made between 2009 and 2013 were produced by women alone. Similar to our findings regarding Israel, when co-produced with men, the numbers of female producers rose to 41%. The overwhelming majority of films (87%) weren't shot by women, and women took no part in the cinematography team (Loist & Prommer, 2019).

**IN WOMEN-DIRECTED FILMS
THERE IS A HIGHER NUMBER OF
WOMEN IN KEY ROLES ON AND OFF
SET – EDITING, SCRIPTWRITING,
PRODUCTION, AND CINEMATOGRAPHY.**



Women in Directing Roles and On-Set Labor Division

As we can see in the following table, in women-directed films there is a higher number of women in key roles on and off set – editing, scriptwriting, production, and cinematography. In 74% of the films (31 films) directed by women, the majority of the films’ key roles²⁵ were staffed by women, and in 10% a gender balance was achieved (in the remaining 16%, men hold the majority of key roles).

These findings match the research literature in the field, which shows that when the film’s scriptwriter or director is a woman or when a film is co-directed by a man and a woman, the number of women taking on key roles increases (Loist & Prommer, 2019; Liddy, 2020). The data presented here cannot point to any causality, but what can be clearly seen is that when a woman serves in a key role, or when the film is co-directed by a man and a woman, there is better representation for women on the film set.

Table 3: Gender-Based Key Roles’ Breakdown in Narrative Features: Films Directed by Women between 2013-2018

Year	Total Feature Films to Debut This Year	Out of Which:			
		Films Directed by Women	Out of Which:		
			Most Key Roles are Women-Staffed ¹	Key Roles Gender Equality Attained	Most Key Roles are Men-Staffed
2013 ¹	39	6	6	–	–
2014	22	6	2	1	3
2015	35	10	9	–	1
2016	35	10	7	2	1
2017	38	6	4	–	2
2018	31	4	3	1	–
Total	200	42	31	4	7
Percentage³		100%	74%	10%	17%

Notes:

- (1) This year lacks full data on two films.
- (2) Meaning at least three key roles out of the main five key roles.
- (3) The overall figure doesn’t amount to a 100% since full data isn’t available on all the films produced in the years analyzed.

²⁵ At least three out of the five key roles.

However, when the film is directed by a man, women’s representation in key roles is extremely low. Between 2013-2018, in 35% of men-directed films – there were no women in key roles at all. In all 155 films directed by men, there was not even one film where women held the majority of the key roles, and only in three films, gender-equality in key roles position was achieved.

Table 4: Gender-Based Key Roles’ Breakdown in Narrative Feature: Films Directed by Men between 2013-2018

Year	Total Feature Films to Debut This Year	Out of Which:				
		Films Directed by Men	Out of Which:			
			Most Key Roles are Women-Staffed ¹	Key Roles’ Gender Equality Attained	Most Key Roles are Men-Staffed	Out of Which: No Women in Key Roles
2013 ¹	39	33	-	1	30	13
2014	22	14	-	-	14	4
2015	35	25	-	-	25	6
2016	35	25	-	1	24	4
2017	38	31	-	1	30	12
2018	31	27	-	-	27	13
Total	200	155	-	3	150	52
Percentage³		100%	-	2%	97%	35%

Notes:

- (1) This year lacks full data on two films.
- (2) Meaning at least three key roles out of the main five key roles.
- (3) The overall figure doesn’t amount to a 100% since full data isn’t available on all the films produced in the years analyzed.

When analyzing the data, it is evident that supporting women's scripts and films is paramount, since it holds the key to significantly raising the potential of women-inclusion in key roles. The 'casting' of key roles is often the responsibility of the directors and producers, who assemble the film's crew.

It is worth mentioning that the inclusion of women in key roles such as scriptwriting and directing affects, in turn, the film's onscreen representation of women in lead roles. An American study analyzing the characters which appear in Hollywood's top grossing 100 films to debut in 2018, showed that films which had at least one woman in the role of writer or director had a higher chance of featuring women in lead roles, compared to films directed by men only (Lauzen, 2019).

Having said that, there are other reasons for the low percentage of women employed in key positions in the film industry. One of them could be the nature of the film industry both in Israel (and in other places worldwide): a market that predominantly relies on project-based freelance work, as well as personal contacts and networking that determine the make-up of the crew team members (Blair, 2001; Blair, Culkin & Randle, 2003; Wreyford, 2015). Networking theories prove time and again that homophily (similarity) is a key element in the recruitment of teams and work crews, thus rendering the networking process one which excludes women and other minorities (see Acker, 1990, 2006; Benschop, 2009; McGuire, 2000).

PART #4

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE
SUPPORT ALLOCATED
BY THE ISRAEL
FILM FUND AND
THE RABINOVICH
FOUNDATION**



Funding Allocation

The Israeli film industry is very much reliant on public film funds, budgeted in accordance with the Cinema Law enacted in 1999 in order to regulate public funding of the Israeli film industry. As part of the Cinema Law regulation process, **The Israeli Film Board** was founded in 2000 under the flagship of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. The Israeli Film Board is tasked with the responsibility of dividing the annual budget as set by law, based on measurable criteria (support assessment) set by the Board.

Out of the five Israeli public film funds, budgeted in accordance with the Cinema Law, two were the main (and sometimes the only supporters) of full-length narrative features: the Israel Film Fund, and the Rabinovich Foundation – Israel Cinema Project. The funds allocate their budgets according to predetermined criteria, whilst each of the funds is responsible for its own allocation, according to the funds' rules and regulations. To get support, filmmakers may apply to any of the funds in the following tracks: Development (to write the script), Production (to produce the films) and Production Completion (post-shooting grant to enable the finishing of the filmmaking process). It is important to mention that neither of the funds awards the full cost of the film, and the fund's support can only account for 70% of the film's budget. The creators must present and attain the extra 30% at the very least; it is possible, however, to request that this section of the funding serve as the directors' and/or producers' fees. The funds are required to publish the submissions' due dates, and filmmakers have the option of submitting the same project to the same fund no more than three times. The projects are read by special committees called '**selection committees**', whose members are chosen from a pool of designated and preselected application readers. The committee examines the projects and chooses a small number of projects to support. The selection committee members' reviews are given to the creators at their request. It is important to note that the number of projects that are granted support in each of the tracks is very low, often in single digits, out of hundreds of submissions submitted annually.

A Gender-Based Analysis of Granted Submissions

One of the most common claims in the film industry regarding the low number of women directors, is that women tend to avoid applying for public film funds.²⁶ This claim has led to the launching of women-only development grants and initiatives, with the most prominent being the **Women in the Frame Association Development Grant**, in

26 This claim has come up in conversations with funds' Chairmen and Chairwomen, industry professionals (women and men), as well as with women initiators of women-only submissions and special projects.

conjunction with **Mifal Hapais**, the Rabinovich Foundation and the Gesher Multicultural Film Fund.²⁷ Whilst the funds' selection committees are supposed to be gender-balanced (following an appeal made by the Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum in 2012), the selection committee for the Women in the Frame grant was made up entirely of women. The make-up of the selection committees is crucial since so many women filmmakers claimed to have experienced gender-based bias and fundamental misunderstandings regarding the world of women when they submitted to the funds' general submission tracks. These claims point at a potentially hostile work-environment for women and may, at least partially, explain the low number of submissions in the general tracks compared with the women-only designated grants. It is important to note that today, following the changes made to the Cinema Law and the support assessments, a pool of selection committee members was set up, from which the funds must select their application assessors. As of January 2020, there are 724 assessors listed in the selection committee members' pool: 371 men and 353 women. Neither the law as it is written, nor the support assessments, require gender-equality on the various selection committees. However, in 2018, a demand was added that 30% of assessors in either fund must be women.²⁸

In the words of writer/director **Dana Goldberg**, who shares her experience of the assessment committee for her first full-length narrative feature, **Alice** (2012):

"Speaking of what the selection committee members told me over the two years we have tried to secure the film's budget: 'she's not very nice, she's not sexy, she's not a good mother, she's not a good wife, she's cold, lacks empathy, non-maternal, she's not this and not that... no one will want to watch it. There are no women like her'. There are no women like her, they said to me, the assessors. So I said to them: 'we're sitting here together in this room, six or seven men and myself, the only woman in the room, and you're telling me there are no women like her? You're telling me these experiences don't exist and women don't experience them? Who are you to tell me that? Who are you to decide that post-natal depression should pass immediately after birth? Or how long it should, in fact, last? Have you experienced post-natal depression? Or perhaps birth?'"²⁹

27 The 'Women in the Frame Development Grant' was open for submissions between 2015 and 2019 in three rounds, with an average of 150 per round.

28 There is much to be learned about the importance of the assessment committees' work from the report examining the film funds' activities, although the part that examines the assessment procedures ignores a gender-based perspective and only examines the parameter of geographical periphery. The final recommendations highlighted the importance of equal representation of women on the assessment committees specifically, and in the industry at large. Galit Wahba Shasho et al. (June 2018). Final Report – The Film Funds Conduct Examination Commission (Hebrew).

29 The quote is taken from the film *In the Director's Chair Sits a Woman*, dir: Smadar Zamir, Prod: Daroma Productions, Israel, 2020.



**WE'RE SITTING HERE TOGETHER
IN THIS ROOM, SIX OR SEVEN MEN
AND MYSELF, THE ONLY WOMAN IN
THE ROOM, AND YOU'RE TELLING
ME THERE ARE NO WOMEN LIKE
HER? ... YOU'RE TELLING ME THESE
EXPERIENCES DON'T EXIST AND
WOMEN DON'T EXPERIENCE THEM?**

- Dana Goldberg, writer & director

The numbers presented below, which represent the submissions for the main Production track (the most highly funded track), clearly reflect the trend.³⁰ The number of submissions by women directors is relatively low compared to that of men directors, in each and every year examined. Between 2013 and 2016³¹ a similar number of funding applications was received by the two funds, 739 in total, and in both of the funds the overwhelming majority of submissions were handed in by men (around 80%).³²

In the case of the Israel Film Fund, the number of women directors who submitted a project to the production track totaled 128 compared with 608 men directors: 17% and 83%, respectively. The Israel Film Fund supported 53 projects overall, or 7% of the number of projects submitted. The support for women directors was slightly lower than their percentage in the overall number of applicants (13%).

In the case of the Rabinovich Foundation, the number of applications from women directors totaled 136, compared with 596 applications by men directors: 18% and 81% respectively (the remaining 1% belongs to applications made by directing duos of men and women directors). The fund supported 102 films, or 14% of the overall number of applications submitted. A significant gap between the number of applications submitted and the number of applications approved has not been detected – for either women or men.

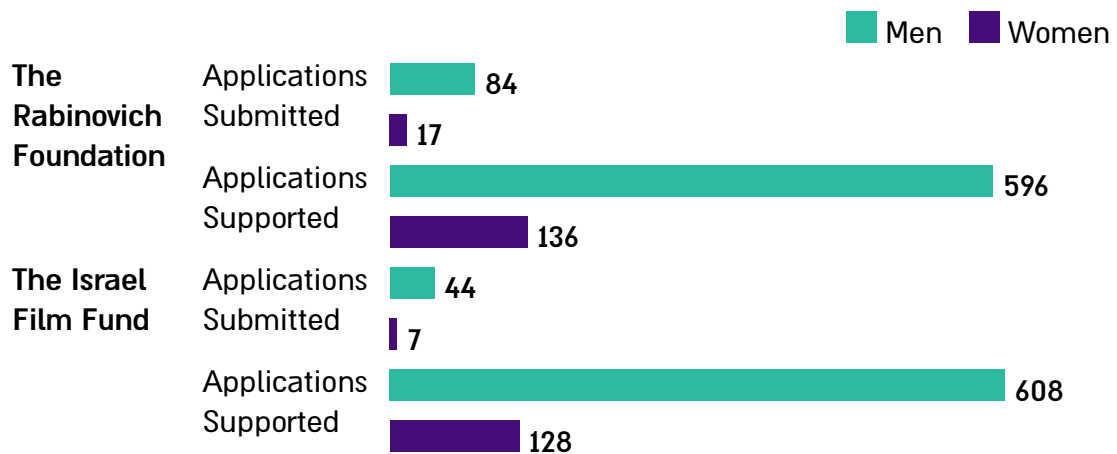
The information gathered supports the claim that the lack of support for women is directly related to the fact that women submit far less by comparison, and raises the question – had women submitted more, would their respective share of grant recipients rise too? Either way, the overall picture seems rather bleak – the overwhelming majority of projects does not receive funding, and applications to the various film funds, more often than not, end up in heartache and disappointment, for men as well as women.

30 The information regarding the submissions was taken from a report examining the work of the Israeli public film funds, see footnote 28.

31 There is no full data regarding the years 2017-2018.

32 It is impossible to determine exactly how many active men and women directors there are currently in Israel, since no such formal data is collected by the Israeli Bureau of Statistics (CBS) or by any other organization. Hence, the information presented here only notes the number of submissions.

Chart 2: Number of Submitted Applications and Number of Supported Applications between 2013-2016¹, by Gender and Fund
Absolute Numbers



Notes:

- (1) There is no updated data available beyond these years.
- (2) The total number of submissions only includes named applications (i.e, with the director's name appearing on it).
- (3) The chart does not include nine applications made by couples of male and female directors working together (three to the Israel Film Fund and six to the Rabinovich Foundation). Three of these applications were granted funding (two from the Israel Film Fund and one from the Rabinovich Foundation).

A Gender-Based Analysis of the Israel Film Fund and the Rabinovich Foundation Support Budgets

As previously mentioned, in the years examined in this report (as well as the years prior) the two main supporters of full-length Israeli narrative features are the IFF and the Rabinovich Foundation.³³ The latter supports documentaries and students' graduation films as well. The majority of their budgets go towards the support of feature production.

Below is a table which compares the average support granted to both female and male applicants between 2013 and 2018, in the mainstream track for the production of full-length narrative features, by the IFF and the Rabinovich Foundation.³⁴ It is

33 The Geshar Multicultural Film fund, Makor Foundation and the NFCT also support full-length narrative features; however, during the years examined by this report, they did not do so consistently, and therefore were not included in the analysis.

34 There may be slight variations between Pilat's and Edusystems reports and this report, since their reports refer to produced films, whereas in this report the data refers to supported films which were not necessarily produced and screened. This is also the reason for the difference in the numbers of films in general, as there are more films that were granted production grants than films that were actually produced and screened.

important to note that the budgets for the support of film production are fixed; hence the average support amounts are similar.

Table 5: Support by Gender and Fund, 2013-2018. In Constant Prices 2018.

Name of Fund	The Israel Film Fund (in ILS)	The Rabinovich Foundation (in ILS)
Total support sum	78,700,000	117,700,000
Number of supported films	66	145
Grant recipients – women directors	13	22
Grant recipients – men directors	51	121
Joint grant recipients – male and female co-directors	2	2
Total support sum – women directors	14,700,000	18,800,000
Total support sum – men directors	60,100,000	96,800,000
Total support sum – mixed-gender co-directors	3,800,000	2,100,000
Percentage of women-directed films (excluding mixed-gender co-directed films)	20%	15%
Average support per film for women-directed films (excluding mixed-gender co-directed films)	1,100,000	854,000
Average support per film for men-directed films (excluding mixed-gender co-directed films)	1,200,000	800,000

Notes:

- (1) The representative exchange rate of 1US dollar (in 2018) was : NIS 3.748
- (2) In some of the years the number of directors is bigger than the number of films since some films were co-directed. The budget average has been calculated according to one director per one film (a co-directed film has been calculated as one film).

In both funds, the number of men directors who were grant-recipients was pointedly higher than that of women: at the IFF, 51 men directors received funding, compared with 13 women directors (two films were co-directed by a man and a woman) whilst at the Rabinovich Foundation, 121 men directors received funding, compared with 22 women directors (two films were co-directed by a man and a woman). As seen before, the large gap in the number of grant recipients from a gender perspective is also related to the difference in the number of submissions.

PART #5

OPHIR AWARDS AND THE ISRAELI DOCUMENTARY FILM COMPETITION



The Ophir Awards

The Ophir Awards, or in full – The Israeli Academy of Film and Television Awards – were founded in 1990 by the Israel Academy of Film and Television and are granted in nineteen categories of the Israeli film industry. The winner of the Best Film Award is sent to the American Oscars as the Israeli candidate in the Best Foreign Film category.

The nominated films are usually ones whose making was completed in that year. Every year, members of the Israeli Academy of Film and Television, 787 women and men in total (as of the completion of this report)³⁵ with an almost equal number of men and women, choose the winning films and filmmakers. In order for the films to be nominated, the filmmakers must submit them and pay a participation fee. There are very few filmmakers who choose not to submit their films to the competition.

The Ophir Awards are the best way to see the 'Cinematic produce' of that year, even if the picture is an incomplete one. Additionally, the awards represent the **recognition** the films and filmmakers get – this recognition is acknowledged via the number of awards and nominations, amongst other things. The awards also reflect the occupational segregation in the film industry – which roles are staffed by women and which are staffed by men.

The following data is gathered for the time period 1999-2019 (unless specified otherwise) in order to present a picture as comprehensive as possible on the makeup of winners and nominees.³⁶

Methodology wise, the winners and nominees are counted in each category every year **separately**. Therefore, the numbers in fact represent the **number of winnings and nominations of men/women rather than the number of winners themselves**. For example, a producer who produced three films that year is counted three times. An editor who won multiple times is counted according to number of wins.

35 To date, the Academy encompasses 424 male members and 363 female members. The Board of Directors encompasses 20 members – ten women and ten men. (As per data supplied by the Academy's management, 9/9/20).

36 The data collected from Wikipedia and the [Academy's website](#) (Hebrew).



Chart 3:

OPHIR AWARDS

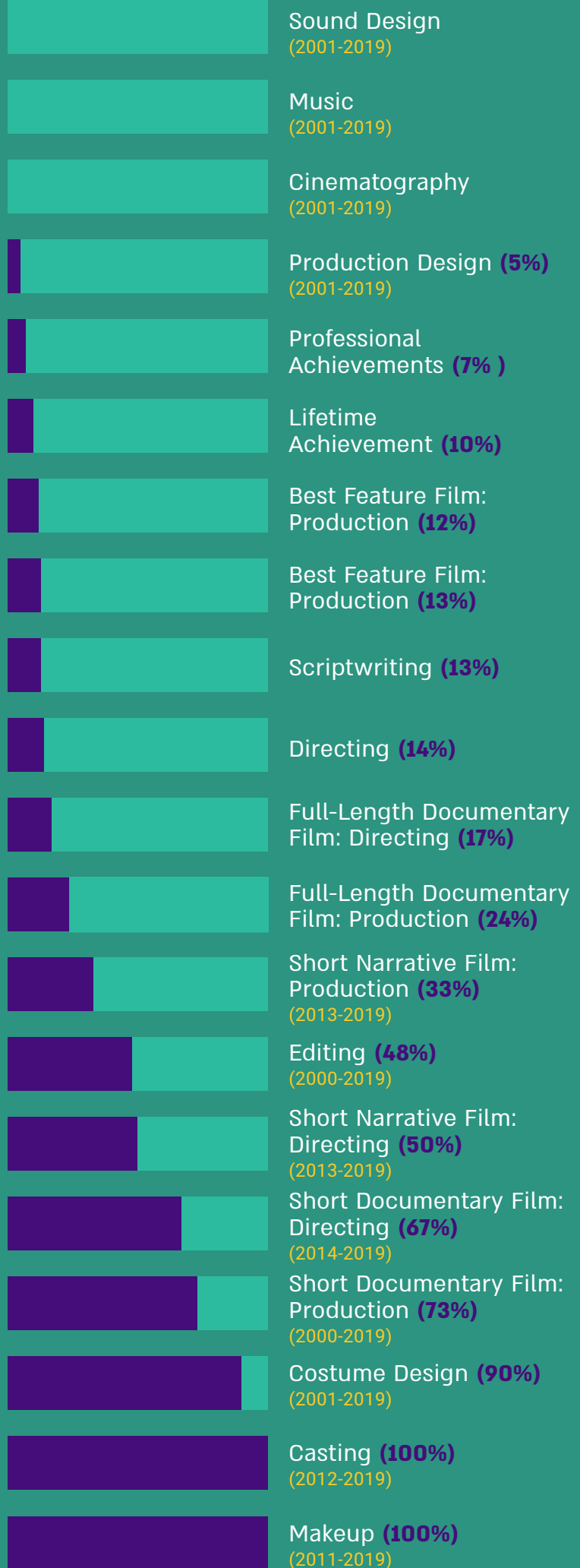
Gendered Breakdown of Wins, 1999-2019

In Percentages, Out of Total in Each Category, in Ascending Order of the Women's Wins Column



Notes:

- (1) The information collected refers to the years 1999-2019 unless specified otherwise.
- (2) The win categories have been segmented. The categories considered: men, woman, a man and a woman, two men and one woman, two women and one man, three men and a woman, four men and a woman, four men and two women, four men and three women.
- (3) The professional accomplishments award wasn't given during 1992-1994, 1996, 2008, 2010-2013 and 2015.



The information regarding the Ophir Awards wins and nominations reflects the occupational segregation between men and women in the film industry, meaning the differentiation between 'feminine' and 'masculine' occupations. A gendered occupation is one where over 60% of professionals are either women or men. A mixed-gender occupation is one where between 40% and 60% are either men or women. In the labor market, gender-based occupational segregation is a prominent phenomenon, when professions such as teaching, social work, administration, bookkeeping, paramedical professions and the various care professions are distinctly feminine, whereas driving, engineering, architecture, construction, tin-smithing and electrical engineering are distinctly masculine professions (Hasson and Dagan-Buzaglo, 2013).

Gender-based occupational segregation also exists in terms of the film's genre and length. Percentage wise, men are more highly represented in the best script, directing and production categories when feature films are concerned, and less represented when full-length documentaries are concerned. On the other hand, amongst the winners of short documentaries and short films, women directors and producers are more highly represented. Essentially, the ratio of women directors and producers who have won in the short documentary category is high - higher even than the percentage of nominees, evidence that, this is a distinctively feminine niche within the Israeli film industry.

Low Rate of Representation of Female Scriptwriters, Directors and Producers of Full-Length Narrative Features and Documentaries

The Ophir Awards data shows that women are hardly ever nominated or win the three key categories of full-length narrative features. In these categories, the percentage of men nominees and winners is much higher than that of women.

Full-Length Narrative Features

The majority of the wins in the Best Narrative Feature Film category, which goes to the film's producers, are group wins. Out of the 293 nominations for the **Production** of a Feature Film, only 55 nominations were for women – slightly less than a fifth (19%). As for the wins data, 34 wins were awarded to mixed-gender production teams, out of which the percentage of women producers was low and comprised 12%. It is worth mentioning that four other awards, given to mixed-gender production teams, were not included in the wins count.³⁷

³⁷ The wins in this category that were not counted in the overall count mentioned above: three men and one woman (1999), four men and a woman (2016), four men and two women (2010), four men and three women (2019).

As for **Directing a Full-Length Narrative Feature**, there were 119 nominations of men and women directors in this category. The percentage of women nominees was only 15%. The wins data show that 22 awards were given to 22 men and women directors, out of which the wins percentage for women directors was only 14%. In other words, the wins reflect the relatively low number of women among nominees.

In the **Best Script Category**, out of 149 nominations overall, women comprised only 22% of the nominees. The wins data shows that 23 awards were given in the category overall, only 13% of which were awarded to women. In this category, the percentage of women's wins is also lower when viewed alongside women's percentage of nominations.

Documentary Films

The Ophir Awards have only two categories for documentary films, whilst the rest of the categories refer to feature films and shorts. The awards for long and short documentaries are given to the filmmakers – both directing and production together. There is no mention of the rest of the films' crew.

There were 123 Directors' nominations overall in the **Best Full-Length Documentary** category. The women nominees comprised only 28%, whilst they comprised only 17% of winners.

There were 202 producers' nominations overall for the **Best Full-Length Documentary Film** category. A third (34%) of the nominees were women but women won less than a quarter (24%).

High Representation of Women in Key Role Positions in the Short Documentary and Short Film Categories

As for short documentary films, the win percentage for women in the directing and production categories is exceptionally high; this also holds in relation to the number of nominations submitted:

There were 39 nominations overall for the **Best Short Documentary Award**, 46% of which were of women directors. The wins were exceptionally high for women – 67% – a clear female majority.³⁸ As for the producers in that category – there were 51 nominations overall, half of them given to women (49%). The awards were given to 11 producers, 73% of them women.

38 The prize for Best Short Documentary is awarded only since 2014. The data refers to 2014-2019 only.

Short narrative films do not get screened in commercial screenings but in film festivals, television, Cinematheques and special screenings. Similarly to the documentary category, in this category the award is given to the creators of the film – directors and producers, but not to any other category or roles. In this category there were 40 nominations overall. 43% of the nominees were women – a relatively high percentage. The number of men and women who won the awards was identical – four each.³⁹ There were also 66 nominations for producers in this category; women accounting for 42.5% of them. 12 awards were given, a third of them to women (33%).

Professional Awards for Full-Length Narrative Features – a Look into the Industry’s Occupational Segregation

In the area of professional awards (which are given, as previously mentioned, only to full-length narrative features) the occupational segregation is distinct: **Casting**, **Costume Design** and **Makeup** are distinctively feminine professions, where the percentage of women award-winners is higher than 89%.

In the **Costume Design** category, there were 105 nominations overall, 81% of them awarded to women. 21 awards were given overall, 90% to women.⁴⁰ In **Casting**, there were 45 nominations overall, 89% of them awarded to women, whilst women made for a 100% of winners in this category. 95% of the 55 nominees in the **Makeup** category were women, and all winners of this category were women.⁴¹

On the other hand, the **Cinematography**, **Music and Sound Design** are distinctively masculine professions, and the percentage of women who were either nominated or won is negligible. There were 101 nominations overall in the cinematography category, only 3% of them to women.⁴² Over the years no woman has won the award.⁴³

There were 126 nominations for the **Original Score** Award, and 237 nominations for the **Soundtrack** Award.⁴⁴ The percentage of women nominees in both these

39 The prize for Best Short Narrative Film is awarded since 2013. The data refers to 2013-2019 only.

40 Costume Design Award for full length narrative feature – data refers to 2001-2019 only.

41 Casting Director Award for full length narrative feature – data refers to 2012-2019 only. The Casting Award was only introduced that year and led to an increased in the number of women who won an Ophir Award in general.

42 Data refers to 2000-2019 only.

43 It is worth mentioning that the report does not refer to the year 2020 in which – for the first time in history – a woman cinematographer was nominated for two films.

44 Original Score Award – data refers to 2000-2019 only; Soundtrack Award – data refers to 2001-2019 only.

categories was negligible and comprised 6% and 2% respectively. No woman even won in these categories either.⁴⁵

Editing seems to be a mixed profession, with 113 nominations overall. Women comprised half of the overall number of nominees (49%). 23 awards were given, half of them to women (48%).⁴⁶

Special Awards: Lifetime Achievements Award and Professional Achievements Award

Unlike other awards, the decision over who wins the **Lifetime Achievement Award** and the **Professional Achievements Award** is taken by the Academy's Board of Directors and not through a general members' vote.⁴⁷

The **Lifetime Achievement Award** was established in 1992 and given to creators across the different categories – actors, directors, producers, key industry figures and entrepreneurs. 27 such awards have been given over the years, only four of them to women, over almost three decades: **Gila Almagor** (1997), **Lia Van-Leer** (1998), **Levia Hon** (2005), and **Michal Bat-Adam** (2019).

The **Professional Achievements Award** is awarded alongside the Lifetime Achievements Award but focuses on film-related vocational professions such as editors, composers, researchers etc. Effectively, there is no major difference between the two awards, as they seem to complement each other. The Professional Achievements Award is not given every year, and since 1995 sixteen men and one woman have won it – **Ara Lapid** (2017).

The 2020 Ophir Awards

This report has been completed prior to the announcement of the winners of this year's Ophir Awards, so the data for 2020 was not included in the charts and gender-based analysis. However, prior to publication of the report, the winners were announced and since the results were very unusual, we decided to include them in a separate category in the report:

45 As previously mentioned, the analysis offered in this report ends with 2019. In 2020 a woman won the Original Music Award for the first time.

46 Editing Award for full-length narrative feature – data refers to 2000-2019 only.

47 Only this year (2020), and following a demand by the Directors Guild representative, the mandatory gender equality on the Board of Management was introduced; today, the board comprises 20 members – ten men and ten women.

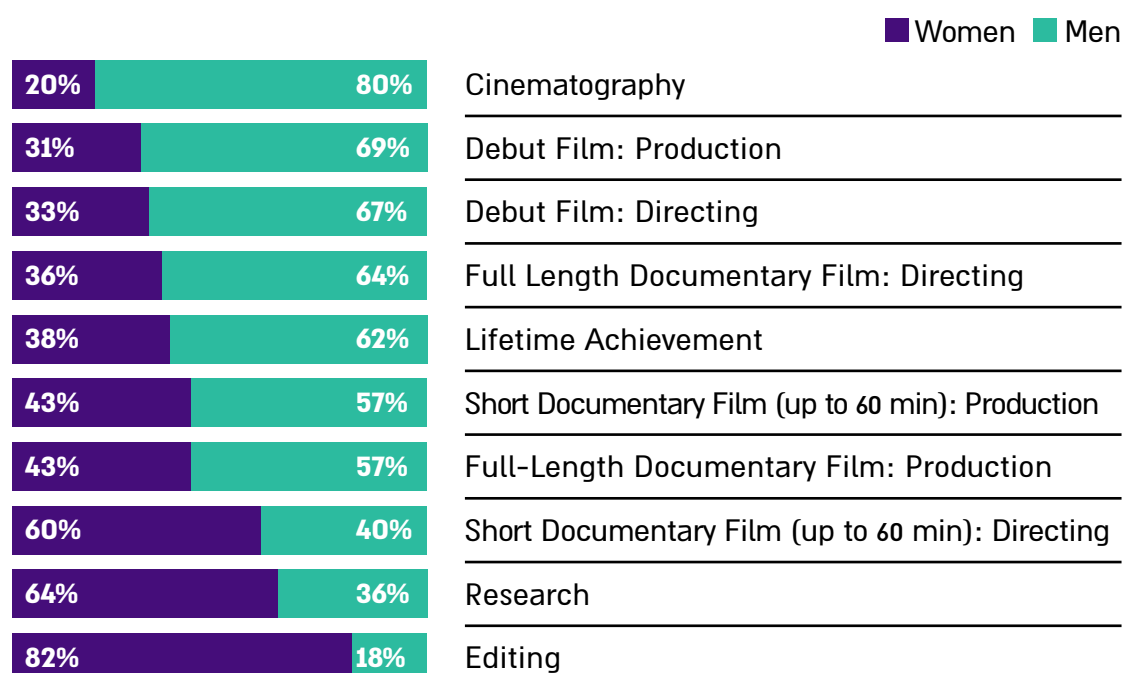
- More women won than men – 16 to 12, respectively, and in more categories.
- For the first time ever, a woman cinematographer (**Daniella Nowitz**) was nominated for two feature films and even won the award for one of them.
- For the first time ever, a woman won an award for Best Original Score (**Karni Postel**).
- Women won **all the awards in** the set categories excluding Soundtrack Design, as well as most of the major prizes: Best Film (a woman director and man and woman producers), Best Script, Best Cinematography, Editing, Casting, Makeup, Costume Design, Original Music, Full Length Documentary (a man and a woman together), and Best Short Narrative Film (a man and a woman together).
- Most of the wins and nominations were of the crew of **Asia** (Dir: **Ruthy Pribar**, Prod: **Aurit Zamir** and **Yoav Roeh**), which comprised an overwhelming majority of women in the film's cast and crew. The case of Asia goes to show how incredibly important it is to have female presence in every on - and off set - category, as we see this presence reflected in the number of wins and nominations awarded to women in 2020.

The Israeli Documentary Film Competition

The Israeli Academy of Film and Television Awards are, as previously mentioned, mainly given out to the creators of feature narrative films (apart from the short and full-length documentary categories). The Israeli Documentary Film Competition completes the scope of the Israeli annual cinematic crop as well as the public and professional recognition the filmmakers enjoy. These awards were established in 2006 and anyone is eligible to apply, providing they pay a fee ranging from ILS 250-600, depending on the category.⁴⁸ As with the Ophir Awards, the voting is open to all members in all categories, except for the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Professional Achievements Award.⁴⁹ These categories are chosen by the Documentary Forum Board of Directors.⁵⁰

Chart 4: The Israeli Documentary Forum Competition – a Gender-Based Breakdown of the Wins Rate, between 2010-2019⁵¹

According to an ascending order of the women's total wins column



Notes:

- (1) The Lifetime Achievement Award wasn't given between 2011 and 2012 and has been given annually since 2013.
- (2) The Professional Achievements Award has been given since 2018.

48 The Israeli Documentary Forum members are eligible for a discounted submission rate.

49 The Israeli Documentary Forum encompasses 342 members: 163 men, and 179 women (based on information submitted by the forum management on September 1, 2020).

50 The Board of Directors encompasses five women and five men. Here too, gender equality is a relatively new parameter, achieved after a long, drawn out struggle.

51 The analysis in this part starts in 2010 and not 2006, since it was the year when the Best Directing and Best Film categories were amalgamated, and the awards in this category go to the directors and producers of each film.

Some categories in this competition cannot be tracked on an annual basis (some categories are included every year while others are not, with no traceable consistency). Therefore, for the purposes of this report, the categories that were examined and analyzed are the key production categories as well as the Best Documentary category. The full information may be found on the [Israeli Documentary Forum](#) website (Hebrew).

Women have a clear majority in the **Editing** and **Research** categories (82% and 64%, respectively). On the other hand, and similar to the features' **Cinematography** category, women cinematographers are under-represented (20%).

Similar to the Ophir Awards,⁵² in the **Full-Length Documentary** category, award-winning women directors (36%) and producers (43%) are a minority. In the **Short Documentary** category – up to 60 mins, the percentages resemble those of the Ophir Awards: women comprise the majority of the directors (60%) and 43% of the producers. In the **Debut Film** category, which is not included in the Ophir Awards and features the filmmakers' first or second film, women directors comprised a third of the winners, and women winners in the production category comprise less than a third (31%).

In the **Lifetime Achievement Award** category, women are only 38% of the winners: **Lena Chaplin** (2012), **Noemi Schori** (2016) and **Ada Ushpiz** (2018). In the last four years, a complete gender balance has been achieved – two women and two men won the award. The Professional Achievements Award, given since 2018, had two winners up to the time of completing this report: one woman- **Billy Segal** (2018), and one man.

The information gathered regarding both the Ophir and the Documentary Forum Competition shows that a short documentary (up to 60 mins) is a distinctively female-led category. The percentage of women award winners in most categories is higher than that of men, and the editing category, where there is a (relative) gender balance when it comes to features, turns into a 'feminine profession' when documentary cinema is concerned. Cinematography, however, remains a distinctively 'masculine' profession in the documentary world as well.

52 It's important to mention that the years assessed in the report regarding the two competitions are incongruent, and that the Documentary Awards were analyzed over a shorter period of time.

Women filmmakers have raised a few assumptions on the reasons for the high percentage of female representation: management of smaller teams (often one or two people), smaller budgets, and more flexible working hours. However, the low budgets are in themselves a major obstacle, since some projects may take years to complete and much of that time remains unbudgeted and unpaid; notably, this reality is hard for anyone – men or women – working in the field. In long term projects – as documentaries generally are – a lot of the time in the process of making the film is not financially rewarded.⁵³

53 Interviews conducted as part of a PhD research (in progress), by PhD candidate Lior Elefant (who is also one of the writers of this report), supervised by Prof. Nitza Berkovich of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ben Gurion University.



A SHORT DOCUMENTARY IS A DISTINCTIVELY FEMALE-LED CATEGORY

The percentage of women award winners in most categories is higher than that of men, and the editing category, where there is a (relative) gender balance when it comes to features, turns into a 'feminine profession' when documentary cinema is concerned.

Summary: The Ophir Awards, the Israeli Documentary Film Competition, and The Gender-Based Role Division in the Film Industry

When analyzing the data on key production roles (directing and producing), the percentage of women nominees and/or winners in the Short Films or Short Documentaries categories is identical to that of men, and sometimes surpasses them. This is not the case for full-length narrative features. From what we know about women in the film industry, it is possible to assume that this is the case since by their nature, short films can be made on significantly smaller budgets and with a much smaller crew, and with some of the short films being made as graduation films, in supportive conditions.⁵⁴

The data collected on full-length documentaries, in both competitions, shows that despite the common perception in research and the industry at large - women direct and create more documentary films than narrative⁵⁵ - when it comes to the awards, they receive less recognition for their work, both as nominees (according to the Ophir Awards data) and as winners.

As for full-length narrative features, the information gathered on the Ophir Awards aligns with similar research done overseas. For example, women account for merely 14% of all Oscar nominations since the Oscars were founded, 92 years ago. Moreover, only five women were ever nominated as directors, and only one woman won it - **Kathryn Bigelow** in 2010 (Levitt et al., 2020). At the Cesar Awards (the French Oscars), women comprise only 10% of nominees for Best Director, since 1976, when the awards were founded (Trajkovic, 2020). At the British Film Academy Awards – BAFTA, since 1969 to date, women stood for 17% only of all nominations in all categories (Sarkisian, 2020).

It is quite noticeable that in the artistic fields which are considered more 'technical', such as Cinematography, Music and Original Score (excluding Editing) there is a vast majority of men, which clearly reflects the industry's gender-based occupational segregation. Whilst it is easy for us to think of

54 Not every student's graduation film can be submitted to the Short Narrative category at the Ophir Awards.

55 See: "[The reason why so many more women direct docs than narrative is infuriating](#)", Angelica Florio, March 2018, Bustle.

the reasons for a clear women's majority in the Makeup and Costume Design professions, it is interesting to analyze the reason for it when Casting is concerned – an award won by women only, with a crushing majority of women nominees, as opposed to Cinematography, an award given to men only and with hardly any women nominees.⁵⁶

According to the Ophir Awards' data, women do not get enough recognition for their 'Professional Achievements' or their 'Lifetime Achievement', and their professional accomplishments are not acknowledged by means of awards. Women's exceptionally low representation is notable, unlike the documentary awards, where women enjoy a higher representation than men (although it is worth mentioning that the number of years tested was lower).

⁵⁶ Some of the reasons regarding the cinematography category were outlined previously.

GENDER-BASED DATA AS IT WAS COLLECTED FROM THE INDUSTRY'S PROFESSIONAL UNIONS

The industry's professional unions' data gives us an indication about the Occupational Segregation in the film industry. Notably, membership in the unions does not necessarily suggest members take active roles in the industry, and conversely, being an active member of the industry does not require a membership in either of the unions – therefore, it is not possible to deduce from membership alone about the industry's professional workers. It is also important to note that the unions include anyone working in the many film and TV related occupations, and that these fields are not separated. Many industry professionals cross over from TV to film, mainly due to financial reasons.

Data regarding the percentage of working men and women directors is not readily available. However, the Directors' Guild has 299 men members and 156 women members (66% and 34%, respectively). The Chairman of the Board is a woman, and there are eleven board members – eight men and three women.⁵⁷

The Writers' Guild has 528 members, 44% of them women.⁵⁸ The Chairman of the Board is a man, and there are eight board members – six men and two women.

In the Editors Guild, women make for 36% of the guild's 366 members.⁵⁹ The Chairman of the board is a man, and the board has eight members – five men and three women.

The Israeli Producers Association (film and TV) has 90 members, 16 of them are women, which make for 17%.⁶⁰ The Chairman of the board is a man, and there are nine board members –seven men and two women.

Notably, the production field is a mixed-gender profession. The Israeli labor market diversity index for 2019, examines the field of production and includes the production

57 Data provided by the Directors Guild on September 1, 2020.

58 Data provided by the Writers Guild on September 2, 2020.

59 Data provided by the Editors Guild on September 2, 2020.

60 Data provided by the Israeli Producers Association on September 1, 2020.

and distribution of full-length narrative features, video, TV shows, recording and publishing of sound and music (such as documentaries, animation, and graphics) as well as the entire TV, radio and internet broadcasts. According to the index, 8,000 employees worked in the production field in 2017, 45% of them men and 55% women. The field includes producers and production assistants, academics, and non-academics, and the wage differentials are considerable. The data gathered shows that women are a clear majority in the field's youngest, lowest-paid age group.⁶¹

From data gathered by Act (Israel Association of Cinema & Television Professionals) which is the Israeli union for all set workers, it is evident that:

Cinematography is a distinct masculine profession: out of the 215 members of the Cinematography department there are only ten women; and out of the 100 members listed as Assistant Camera, only nine are women. The Sound department consists entirely of men, and two women are listed in the Lighting department. There are 50 women members listed in the Costume Design department and in the Makeup department – 74 women and one man.⁶²

According to Act's protocol, the Board of Directors is made up of representatives of all of the union's various production departments. As of the completion of this report, the Chairman of the Board is a man, and there are eleven board members – four women and seven men.

The Israeli Documentary Forum consists of 163 men members and 179 women members (48% and 52%, respectively).⁶³

It is worth mentioning that in 2012, the Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum was established as a volunteer-based, non-professional union, with the aim of syndicating and supporting the women of the Israeli film and TV industry. The forum mainly deals with raising awareness to the issue of gender within the broad film and TV local industry, runs workshops and professional gatherings and cooperates with the industry's professional guilds.⁶⁴

61 Data provided by Yafit Alfendry, in charge of gender equality at the Israeli Bureau of Statistics, based on the Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities, July 2020.

62 19/3/20 data, [Act website](#).

63 Data provided by the Israeli Documentary Forum, 1/9/20.

64 The forum is mainly active online, at the Facebook group [Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum](#).

PART #6

REASONS FOR THE OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION IN THE FILM INDUSTRY



Many of the reasons for the gendered Occupational Segregation in the film industry are similar to other economic sectors in the labor market, although it has its unique characteristics. Specifically, the research done on the topic of professional gender imbalance, points to a work environment which excludes women and is rife with sexual harassment (Gill, 2014; Jones & Pringle, 2015; Loist & Prommer, 2019).

Work environment and professional work ethics which make it hard to combine career and family life

After graduating and as they get older, women tend to look for job security and become salaried employees, frequently because they seek a way to combine earning money with raising children. The majority of the film-world-related professions involve freelance work, require intensive fundraising, and are characterized by job uncertainty and long hours. In other words, the expected work ethics make it exceptionally difficult for women to combine parenthood with professional careers. The difficulty in integrating a career in film with family life and the gender-based societal expectation from women to be the primary family caregivers, are considered the most commonly accepted explanations for the low number of women in the industry (Gill, 2014). The time it takes to make a film is also considered a factor. On average, the making of a full-length narrative feature takes two years (including the submission process, funding approval, production, editing and distribution), whilst many women find it hard to commit not to get pregnant and give birth during such a long period of time. A survey carried out by the **Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum**, the **Directors Guild**, and **Israel Women's Network** (yet to be published) shows that 70% of all Israeli filmmakers (both women and men) point at the great difficulty they experience in trying to integrate family life with their professional career. 30% of all women who participated in the survey and are industry professionals reported to be the children's primary caregiver, whilst 50% of them testified to reducing their work hours or settling for less desired projects due to being the children's primary caregiver.

As director **Keren Ben Rafael** testifies:

"I'm a film director and a mother of two. Like every director, man or woman, who is also a parent, each project I direct requires comprehensive preparation

and help from my partner, mother, mother-in-law and often the rest of our extended family. The money I make as the film's director doesn't allow me to hire a full-time nanny, but on the other hand, the long work hours require that I find a solution for the children. Sometimes the combination of parenting and filmmaking seems impossible and feels as though instead of focusing on the film itself, I spend too much time worrying about all the logistics around it".⁶⁵

Accordingly, it is clear that the number of women filmmakers of short films and short documentaries is significantly higher, since the work hours are easier to control, and the budgets needed are relatively much lower.

Gender stereotypes

Similar to gender stereotypes in other work or study fields, so is the case in the world of cinema, where some of the professions are perceived to be more 'technical' and therefore less suitable for women, such as sound and lighting. Directing, similar to management, is perceived as a masculine profession which demands giving instructions and being authoritative. As previously mentioned, there are stereotypes around cinematography as being a masculine profession, and these are also backed by the research literature in the field (Connolly, 2020). On the other hand, there are professions which are perceived as feminine, such as makeup and costume design.

The professional gender-bias also has to do with language. In a generic production budget sheet, outlining the job title of each role on the set and their projected budget, the gender is already pre-determined and inserted into the job title, since Hebrew is a gendered language. So, for example, Director, Producer, and Lighting Designer appear in male form, whereas Makeup and Costume Design appear in female form. This goes to show how, even before the actual crew was chosen for any specific project, the gender-bias has already been pre-assigned. Other job titles that can be added to these examples, albeit in minor roles, include Script Supervisor and Production Assistant, which appear in female form.⁶⁶

65 The quote is taken from a joint project of the Directors Guild, the Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum and the Israel Women's Network. The project hasn't been published to date.

66 In Hebrew, the literal translation of the role is Water Girl, which is not only derogatory and demeaning, but also doesn't have a male-form equivalent.



**SOMETIMES THE COMBINATION
OF PARENTING AND FILMMAKING
SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE AND FEELS
AS THOUGH INSTEAD OF FOCUSING
ON THE FILM ITSELF, I SPEND TOO
MUCH TIME WORRYING ABOUT ALL
THE LOGISTICS AROUND IT.**

- Keren Ben Rafael, Director

The content worlds of mainstream Cinema

Within a predominantly male social order, which is still very much the norm, men's stories are far more likely to be perceived as universal, whilst women's stories are still perceived as belonging to a cinematic niche. Thus, the content worlds of women tend to be attributed to 'Women's Films'. So, for example, whilst women are an integral part of the filmmaking community, the terms 'Women's Cinematic Golden Age', or 'Feminine Cinema', can still be heard. In this context, there is less public interest in issues that interest women directors, in women's stories and in films with women as protagonists (Liddy, 2020). Additionally, when the gatekeepers (assessment committee members, but also film critics) are predominantly male, there are testimonies of gender-bias in the application reviews women applicants receive.⁶⁷

In an interview conducted by **Nirit Anderman** with four women directors and scriptwriters, one of the directors described her experience:

"There is this male hegemony among decision makers in the field - whether among lecturers, fund managers or film critics. From the moment there is a male majority in these positions, a situation arises in which the taste that determines which films will be made here is that of the male hegemony. It simply crowds out other tastes, and then a woman who goes to a fund to explain why she wants to make her film must, first of all, translate her [concept for the] film into masculine language" (Anderman, 2013).⁶⁸

The lack of female role models

The fields of directing, production, scriptwriting, etc., preserve the gender-bias work division and make it hard for women to break through the celluloid ceiling. The lack of female role models is a major blockage for women in the industry, as depicted in interviews conducted with women who work in the film industry, as well as in studies on the subject (Loist & Prommer, 2019; Redvall & Sørensen, 2018). The issue of role models and mentors for women has not been overlooked by the film funds, and today there are a number of programs offering unique mentoring for women in the fields of narrative and documentary.

67 For more information regarding this matter, see the part of this report which focuses on the topic of assessment reviews.

68 The article offers further explanations on the low number of Israeli women filmmakers: lack of female role models, lack of female teachers in film schools, concerns regarding age and family life, traditional perceptions of what is a viable job, etc.

Frequent exposure to sexual harassment and assault

Even before the global #MeToo movement, the exclusion of women from film sets due to a prevalent culture of sexual harassments in the film industry was an issue of concern for Israeli filmmakers, both women and men. As ex-MK **Michal Rozin**, who took part in writing the Guilds' treaty against sexual harassment in the film industry, said:

"I had a spokeswoman who was a film student herself, and because of one very troubling complaint we got, we began talking with women in the film industry. We realized it's a very widespread phenomenon, which makes it very hard for women to work in the film industry. Women leave the industry because of sexual harassment. Women get pushed out of and fired from projects if they dare complain. A makeup artist complained a talent had harassed her and was told it'd be better if she stopped working on the project. There are talents and actors on set, who are ostensibly not the makeup artist's employers, and still the series or film revolves around the talent and no one dares confront him about it. The situation becomes impossible. It's especially intolerable for women, but also for men who get harassed. It's such a small community that once you make a complaint, no one wants to hire you anymore" (Bin Nun, 2016).

In recent years, many women (and men) have come forward to share their stories of sexual harassment in the film and TV industry, painting a grim picture. In 2016, all of the industry's professional guilds (except for the Israeli Producers' Association) signed a treaty against sexual harassment, and the struggle to eradicate these harassments continues today, and was even the center of a discussion at the Committee for the Promotion of Women's' Rights and Gender Equality at the Knesset (the Israeli parliament).⁶⁹

69 The discussion was held on February 13, 2018.



**WOMEN LEAVE THE INDUSTRY
BECAUSE OF SEXUAL
HARASSMENT. WOMEN GET
PUSHED OUT OF AND FIRED
FROM PROJECTS IF THEY DARE
COMPLAIN (...) IT'S SUCH A SMALL
COMMUNITY THAT ONCE YOU MAKE
A COMPLAINT, NO ONE WANTS TO
HIRE YOU ANYMORE.**

- Michal Rozin, Former member of Knesset

PART #7

DIVERSITY OF ISRAELI WOMEN FILMMAKERS



This report examines the gender inequality within the Israeli film industry and does so whilst binarily distinguishing between women and men in terms of sex rather than gender. With that being said, and with the wish of looking at this matter in depth, we also seek to examine the industry's various socially and culturally distinct groups; each one with its own challenges and difficulties. We wish to say that each of these subcultures requires a more extensive and specific research, which we may not be able to include in this report, but it can certainly serve as the basis for such research in the future. In the following part we will take a deeper look into Mizrahi (Jews of Middle Eastern descent),⁷⁰ Palestinian, Orthodox, and LGBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and queer) female and female-identified filmmakers.

Future research is required for immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, as well as for women from the religious communities and other minority groups.

⁷⁰ Mizrahi women include Jewish women whose families immigrated to Israel from Asian and African countries. The majority arrived to Israel in the 1950's-1960's.

Mizrahi Women Filmmakers

Written by Dr. Merav Alush Levron

It is common to examine the representation of minority groups within the dominant culture and society through two complementary prisms: the quantitative and the qualitative. Each of these two variables has an impact on the nature of women's visibility within the artistic arena, as well as their political, social and artistic influence on Israeli cinema. The qualitative dimension has a specific gravity in the evaluation on the conditions of women's onscreen presence and visibility: their narrative and ideological role, as well as the way in which cinema imagines the gendered and social order, its construction of the viewer's gaze upon female identity, the way it shapes characters outside practices of objectification and stereotyping, the aesthetic forms the artwork suggests, and more. In Israeli society, these conditions of visibility have multifaceted meanings when non-hegemonic (minor) women are at stake – non-Caucasian women as well as women of non-Jewish background, since their representation is bound not only by gender but also by ethnicity, socio-political status, nationality, race, and the political crossovers between these identity-forming variables. As suggested in a research conducted by **Israella Shaer-Meoded (2016)**, women entered the film industry only forty years after it was established, and those who managed to direct were only young, middle-class Ashkenazi women, with either social, familial, or political leverage, which allowed them access to positions of power within the Israeli culture. Mizrahi women, however, were excluded from Israel's political and social establishments, and subsequently, from the artistic and cinematic arenas.

Evaluating the present rate of women from non-hegemonic groups is an overall political, institutional and systemic challenge; however, in the case of Mizrahi women, there is an added complexity to this challenge due to a number of factors which specifically and uniquely affect the Mizrahi context, some of which are also interconnected and feed off each other:

1. Systemic and social denial regarding the categorizing of Mizrahi women as discriminated against, which consequently led to lack of cooperation on their part with systemic factors, when there were attempts made to collect relevant data and find an overall solution for their under-representation.

2. Mizrahi women who fight for their place and position in the public sphere or women who managed to break through the glass ceiling may deny their background due to cultural and socio-economic fear of being marked as such by the group's hierarchical power relations.
3. Mizrahi women who disregard the issue of descent by not granting political meaning to their ethnic identity, and/or identifying themselves as a part of a common Mizrahi group.
4. A sociological argument regarding the question of who is considered Mizrahi and who is not: for example, how a director from a Bulgarian, Spanish, Turkish or Georgian origin should be treated, etc.

At the same time, the inequality in the representation of Mizrahi women in the film industry, the history of the exclusion of their cultures, voices, and life experiences from the big screen, as well as the representation problems inherent in the visibility of feminine Mizrahiyut (Mizrahi'sm), are documented in critical research into the Israeli cinema from the late 80's of the 20th century, till today (see Lubin, 1998; Shohat, 1991, 1993).

In order to change this under-representation, a few factors which hold back the progress of Mizrahi women filmmakers must be taken into consideration:

1. Economic barrier: Mizrahi women usually do not have a stable economic base to help them develop their professional career.
2. Cultural barrier: despite the growing awareness of multiculturalism in the film industry and supporting funds, it seems that cultural diversity is still perceived as an ethnic, sectorial niche rather than a fundamental, natural, deep and democratic condition of Israeliness.
3. Geographical barrier: Mizrahi women who live in the geographical periphery do not have access to the same goods, resources and social networking enjoyed by women from the hegemonic geographical center.
4. Identity barrier: denial of the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi conflict that is still prevalent within Israeli society is a psychological and socio-economic barrier amongst young, up-and-coming Mizrahi women filmmakers who are just starting out, and they feel they need to downplay or conceal their identity so as not to be ethnically marked.

Issues of representation arising from the array of testimonies by Mizrahi women who work in the film industry and fight for their voices to be heard within it, as well as from

their cinematic work, often serve as a mirror for both the social processes which take place outside of the film industry and for the women's personal or communal stories. Moreover, some of the Mizrahi women who stand behind a Mizrahi cinematic work, are activists with a political consciousness regarding the historical and present-time exclusion or under-representation. They are well aware of the importance of Mizrahi and gender-based self-representation in the industry, on funds' assessment committees and in the cinematic works themselves.

Paving the Path and Marching On

The first two short films by Mizrahi women filmmakers, who gave an initial narrative representation to a female Mizrahi identity are **Cordonia**, an autobiographic film by **Dina Zvi Riklis** (1984) and **Jacky** by **Rachel Esterkin** (1990, co-written with **Shemi Zarhin**). In these two television dramas, their ethno-status is different. Mizrahi women are positioned and represented outside the hegemonic point of view and outside the norm and narratives of the national Ashkenazi culture (Lubin, 1992, 2000).

In the field of narrative features, the first full-length narrative feature came out in 1994, by director Dina Zvi Riklis (**Dreams of Innocence**), based on a book by **Ronit Matalon**. But the very inception of the Mizrahi women's self-representation process began with the pioneering film **ShChur** (1995, dir: **Shmuel Hasfari**), an autobiographical film by **Hanna Azoulay Hasfari** based on her original script. **ShChur** first brought the story of a Jewish Moroccan family from the geographic periphery of Israel onto the big screen, from the point of view of a Mizrahi woman filmmaker and an immigrant's daughter. The film exposes the inter-generational rift caused by the experience of immigration, and the meeting between Mizrahi immigrants and the Ashkenazi hegemony. It presents a critical and stirring feminine Mizrahi narrative regarding motherhood, family, class and ethnicity, as well as the Ashkenazi hegemony. The new Mizrahi politics in **ShChur** exposed the Mizrahi woman's identity as hybrid and multifaceted, and alongside the internal and universal criticism it raised against familial patriarchal norms. It presented the Moroccan Jewish culture as a source of agency and belonging, thus undermining its perception as a primitive culture by the hegemony. In **ShChur**, Azoulay Hasfari planted the seeds for the growth of a feminist, multicultural narrative within the world of Israeli cinema, thus, paving the way for women filmmakers who come from non-hegemonic subcultures to tell their familial, communal, and feminine story.

Twelve years after creating her first narrative feature, Dina Zvi Riklis returned to the big screen with her film **Three Mothers** (2006), written with scriptwriter **Alma Ganihar**; and between 2004 and 2013 **Ronit Elkabetz**, created with her brother **Shlomi Elkabetz** their feminist, family trilogy (**To Take a Wife, Shiva, Gett: The Trial of Vivian Amsalem**). This phenomenal trilogy left a special mark on Israeli cinema and paved the way for the creation of multicultural Israeli cinema and for the feminization of Israeli cinema from a dual perspective: Moroccan Israeli-peripheral, and humane-universal. Elkabetz' unique voice as a maker and an actress reverberated outside of Israel and contributed to the international status of Israeli cinema.

In the documentary field, the first pioneer to break ground for Mizrahi women onto the big screen was **Senyora Bar David** with her film **Wadi Salib** (1995), and her exquisite autobiographical documentary **The South: Alice Never Lived Here** (1998). The work of Bar David explores the Jewish memory as well as other collective, national traumas which occupy spaces and territories within Israel and outside of it. Bar David connects between these traumas and the Jewish, feminine past (as well as the Palestinian in Wadi Salib) and the present socio-economic status, gender, and ethnicity of her protagonists.

Another prominent filmmaker is **Iris Rubin**, who created **Hide and Seek** (1998), **Who Created Me as Thy Will** (free translation, 2003), and **Asmar** (2009), amongst others.

One more prominent creator is documentary producer and activist **Osnat Trabelsi**. Born in Ashdod, and former Chairwoman of the Israeli Documentary Forum, Trabelsi has managed to break through the glass ceiling that Mizrahi women experience in the film industry with perseverance and determination. She produced an array of films that contributed to the strengthening and promotion of the Israeli political documentary cinema, and often works with filmmakers from non-hegemonic and disadvantaged social groups such as Mizrahi, Palestinian, women and others. Her films include **Arna's Children** (dir: **Juliano Mer-Khamis**, 2003), **Badal** (**Ibtisam Mara'ana**, 2005), **Gole Sangam** (**Sarit Haymian**, 2007), **Ashkenaz** (**Rachel Leah Jones**, 2007), **Sound of Torture** (**Keren Shayo**, 2013), **An Ordinary Life** (**Efrat Shalom-Danon** and **Gili Danon**, 2019), and others. Other women filmmakers, who belong to the new wave of contemporary documentary filmmakers, explore in their works questions of identity, inter-generational issues, Jewish Mizrahi culture, geographical periphery and social status, and other issues of concern and interest to Sephardic-

Mizrahi politics. These filmmakers include **Meital Abuksis**, **Jane Bibi**, **Liat Daudi**, **Noam Edry**, **Sarit Haymian**, **Oshri Hayon** and **Hila Cohen**, **Moran Ifergan**, and **Israela Shaer-Meoded**, amongst others.

In the years examined in this report (2013–2018), Israeli cinema has enjoyed further documentary and narrative works by Mizrahi women filmmakers who directed their debut films. In the field of narrative features, 18 years after *ShChur* came out, Hanna Azoulay Hasfari wrote and directed **Orange People** (2013). In the film, the filmmaker returns to her childhood origins and to her mother, who was forced into marriage at a young age, and shows how her mother's traumatic experiences left their marks on her daughters.

In 2014, **Encirclements** by **Lee Gilat** and **Ben Zaken** by **Efrat Corem** were featured in Israeli cinemas. *Encirclements* draws on Gilat's personal world, and the traditional, observant neighborhood in which she grew up. She is depicting the profile of a Mizrahi neighborhood where a flexible Jewish observant lifestyle is inherent to its people, serving as a meaningful anchor for the neighborhood's vibrant and rich communal life. Ben Zaken's film takes place in the southern, poor neighborhood of Ashkelon, and the protagonists are second and third generation, showing the social tracking of Mizrahi immigrants to lives of poverty and indigence in the geographical and social periphery of Israel. Corem perforates the metropolitan, hegemonic gaze on Israel's ethnic and socio-economic margins, whilst dismantling the hegemonic, liberal, secular and Ashkenazi gaze on her protagonists. In an [interview](#), she spoke about the practices of representation in her film: *"If I was to look at the 'south' or the 'periphery' or the 'slums' according to how they are perceived and looked upon, I'd be in a pretty bad place. My one and only intention in the film was to perforate and punch a hole through this image. And through this hole, try and reach the emotional reality, my passion"*. Like in *Encirclements* the film **The Women's Balcony**, written by **Shlomit Nehama** (2016, Dir: **Emil Ben-Shimon**) presents a Jewish, observant world. Similar to *Encirclements*, *The Women's Balcony* presents this world from a feminist-traditional perspective. Another contemporary filmmaker is **Limor Shmila**, Akko-born, whose debut narrative feature **Montana** (2017) represents queer culture in the country's geographic periphery, thus fulfilling Shmila's desire to connect between her hometown and her cinema.

In the field of short films, a prominent creator is scriptwriter **Batel Moseri**. Born and raised in Bat-Yam, Moseri was awarded two consecutive Ophir Awards for her films

Committed (2018, dir: Lee Gilat) and **Bracha** (2020, dir: Mickey Triest and Aaron Geva). Moseri brings a traditional, socio-economic and LGBTQ-oriented narrative to the world of Israeli cinema, whilst dismantling the hegemonic outlook on these representations and then reconstructing them into an innovative cinematic creation. In an [interview](#) about her work, Moseri demonstrated her socio-political reluctance to be narrowed down to an 'ethnic' filmmaker as well as towards the reductive notion of boxing her as lesbian, bisexual, or someone who grew up on the wrong side of the tracks, yet at the same time clearly stated: *"I am not a Tel Avivian filmmaker!... I think it's a miracle that a Mizrahi woman who comes from where I come from will achieve what I achieved. There are too many obstacles to overcome on the way. How can you find the time to make art when your home is being impounded? It's not so simple when you don't have a stable home and stable parents, both financially as well as emotionally. If you fall, you fall"*.

The self-testimonials of Mizrahi women filmmakers and the issues they conjure up in their creations, express the cultural and personal connection between the female, cinematic narrative the films convey, and the filmmakers' cultural, political and social identities. They also express the representational challenge Mizrahi women filmmakers' experience, especially those who create their work out of awareness of their identity, personal memories, communities, etc. Not all works by the above mentioned filmmakers are Mizrahi – i.e. works in which the Mizrahiyut is present as a cultural, political, historical, Jewish, social, class-based, geographic, gender-based or LGBTQ-related subject matter. However, in effect, all Mizrahi women filmmakers who delve into representations of their peripheral or Mizrahi identities in some or all of their works raise, directly or indirectly, questions about their identity in different and varied ways. Having said that, these filmmakers are often heard talking about the sense of weight being put on their shoulders as far as the task of representation is concerned. They are critical of the reduction of their artistic and professional position due to the reductive nature of the broader public discussion regarding Mizrahiyut. This issue, which can be termed 'the burden of the minor woman', carries a wider political meaning (which cannot be discussed here in depth) but remains relevant to the types of barriers Mizrahi women filmmakers face. For example, reductive ethnicization of Mizrahi culture also characterizes decision-makers, assessment committees' members, artistic directors etc., in charge of making path-changing and even life-changing professional decisions. Therefore, it is important to confront this challenge both in the artmaking itself, as well as through research.

The description above regarding the artistic scope of Mizrahi women filmmakers might give the wrong impression: that these filmmakers broke through the glass ceilings women face in the film industry in general, and non-hegemonic women especially. This is not the case. Given the information we have, a mere 10% of all active women filmmakers in the Israeli film industry are of Mizrahi descent. It is something which clearly points to a distinctive discrimination and under-representation, which beg for a fundamental change. Consideration also needs to be given to the gap between the under-representation of Mizrahi women filmmakers on one hand, and their specific gravity and distinct cultural contribution to the Israeli film industry (it is enough to mention the influence and mark of Ronit Elkabetz and Hanna Azoulay Hasfari) on the other. This phenomenon illustrates how important the fight to amend the inequality in representation is to the Israeli culture at large.



**IF I WAS TO LOOK AT THE 'SOUTH'
OR THE 'PERIPHERY' OR THE
'SLUMS' ACCORDING TO HOW
THEY ARE PERCEIVED AND
LOOKED UPON, I'D BE IN A PRETTY
BAD PLACE. MY ONE AND ONLY
INTENTION IN THE FILM WAS TO
PERFORATE AND PUNCH A HOLE
THROUGH THIS IMAGE.**

- Efrat Corem, Director

Jewish Orthodox Women Filmmakers

A Parallel World

Based on Information Given by Marlyn Vinig, an Orthodox Cinema Researcher

The Israeli female Orthodox cinema began to emerge and gain public, commercial screenings at the end of the 1990's. This type of cinema is created by Orthodox women filmmakers for Orthodox women. It is estimated that there are 120 active Orthodox men and women filmmakers, who have created around 300 films over the past two decades.

Orthodox cinema began as a masculine trend in the nineties but quickly grew to become a thriving, feminine trend, to the point where, today, male filmmakers have female pseudonyms by which they are known.

Orthodox cinema, by nature, is characterized by gender-segregation: male directors work on all-male sets and create films for male audiences, mostly in the action genre. Female directors work with all-female sets on films which are predominantly educational, documentaries, and melodramas, aimed at an all-female audience. Female scholars suggest that Orthodox cinema focuses on women's life experiences and points of view in a world where their experience is hidden from the public eye (Vinig, 2011).

In recent years, there has been an annual turnout of between 4-16 films by Orthodox women filmmakers. The screenings take place in makeshift cinemas set up in public halls in the heart of the communities' neighborhoods and towns across the country, as well as in seminars, girls' summer camps and forty international screening points, mainly around prominent Jewish holidays (Sukot, Hannukah, Passover and the summer break). Films made by Orthodox men filmmakers are mainly created for private, home-based DVD viewing.

Orthodox women filmmakers learn as they go along and improve from one film to the next. Today they are able to take a documentary film course at the Orthodox wing of "Ma'aleh" Film School, take up scriptwriting courses at the Gesher Multicultural Film Fund's incubators as well as at the "Torat HaChaim" Film School, and gain professional documentary films training at the "Teacher's House" (Sharansky) in Bnei Brak, under the guidance of Noa (Violette) Mendelson.

The films are privately funded, and to date, except for a few grants given by the Rabinovich Foundation, no major film fund has supported Orthodox films. Orthodox women filmmakers experience difficulties in securing public funding not only because they work in what is essentially a parallel industry which is not recognized by mainstream Israeli cinema, but also because of its focus on women-related topics and female protagonists. A number of Orthodox women filmmakers are members of the Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum and the forum makes sure to create opportunities for them as well.

As far as public recognition goes, a well-known example would be **Rama Burshtein's** win of 7 Ophir Awards including: Best Film, Best Director and Best Script, for her feature **Fill the Void** (2014), as well as the Best Script Award for her subsequent film, **The Wedding Plan** (2017). Another example is director **Dina Perlstein's** 2016 win of the Ministry of Education's Jewish Culture Award.

Israeli Citizens' Palestinian Women Filmmakers⁷¹

Based on information supplied by filmmaker Rana Abu Fraiha

It is very difficult, even nearly impossible to find information regarding Palestinian women filmmakers, except for directors/producers.

During the years covered by this report, three full-length narrative feature films were created in Israel by Palestinian women: **Villa Touma** (2014) – written and directed by **Suha Arraf**; **Personal Affairs** (2016) – written and directed by **Maha Haj**; **In Between** (2016), written and directed by **Maysaloun Hamoud**. In 2017, Hamoud's film was nominated for an Ophir Award for Best Film, and Hamoud herself was nominated for the Best Script, Directing and Casting Awards that same year. The Best Leading Actress and Best Supporting Actress Awards went to two of the film's stars: **Shaden Kanboura** and **Mouna Hawa**, both Palestinian actresses. Apart from Maysaloun Hamoud, Suha Arraf was nominated together with **Eran Riklis** for the Best Script Award for **The Syrian Bride** (2004). These are the only two women filmmakers to have been nominated for Ophir Awards in the narrative categories between the years of 1999–2019. It is important to mention that it is not only women filmmakers that are generally absent from the nominations' lists, but Palestinian filmmakers in general: between 2002 and 2019 only four Palestinian filmmakers were nominated for Ophir Awards,⁷² and only one of them won – scriptwriter **Ali Wakad** for **Bethlehem** (co-written with **Yuval Adler**, in 2013).

A very prominent Palestinian woman documentary filmmaker is **Ibtisam Mara'ana**; film director and producer who recently won the 2019 Sami Michael Award for Social Justice and Equality for her cinematic body of work. Mara'ana directed and produced more than ten documentaries over the past two decades. In 2007, she was nominated for an Ophir Award for Best Documentary for her film **Three Times Divorced**. One of the films she produced, **In Her Footsteps**, by **Rana Abu Fraiha**, won the Best Full-Length Documentary Award at the 2018 Israeli Documentary Forum Competition and was nominated for an Ophir Award that same year. From 1999 to date, Mara'ana and Abu Fraiha are the only two Palestinian filmmakers to have ever been nominated for an Ophir Award in the Documentary category.

Up until the global Covid-19 crisis hit the film industry, there were a number of film festivals which featured works by Palestinian women filmmakers – **Haifa**

71 For the purpose of this report, we will refer to this group as Palestinian women filmmakers.

72 In 2002, filmmaker **Ali Nassar** was nominated for a number of awards for his film **In The 9th Month**; in 2004 filmmaker **Tawfik Abu Wael** was nominated for numerous awards for his film **Thirst**; in 2019 filmmaker **Sameh Zoabi** was nominated for the Best Script Award for his film **Tel Aviv on Fire**.

Independent Film Festival, Palestinian Cinema Days Festival, as well as two Israeli festivals – 48MM Festival and Solidarity Tel Aviv Human Rights Film Festival.

Apart from these festivals, all of Israel's major film festivals – Jerusalem, Haifa and DocAviv, feature films by Palestinian filmmakers, and in 2016 two Israeli Palestinian women filmmakers won the two major prizes: Personal Affairs by Maha Haj won the Best Film Award whilst In Between by Maysaloun Hamoud won the Best Debut Narrative Feature Award.

Filmmaker Rana Abu Fraitia, who in recent years worked nationwide in various cinema-related roles,⁷³ explains the low numbers of both women and men Palestinian filmmakers:

- **The socio-political status** of Palestinian women, who experience inter-connected social, national and gender-based difficulties that affect their employment opportunities both in general as well as in the film industry.
- **Limited access to film schools and faculties** – there are very few high-school level film studies classes, if any, in Arab municipalities, and art studies in general are absent both from formal and informal education frameworks. In the Bedouin community, for example, there are hardly any extracurricular activities at all. This is a result of a lack of national and municipal resources and funds allocated to them, as well as a cultural climate of dismissal of artistic pursuits as viable professional options. This notion is commonplace amongst many minority groups, since survival takes precedence.
- **Lack of role models and media representation** – there is a narrow array of film representations of Arab society, and the existing representations are predominantly negative and primitive, and do not encourage notions of first-hand artistic creation (you can't be what you can't see). It is not just about representation but also about the difficulty in finding role models, mentors and adequate professional guidance. *"It is so rare", says Rana, "to find mentors with whom you share a social/cultural background and who know what you are going through; one phone call every few months can be so fulfilling and inspiring for an artist"*.
- **Difficulty in finding culturally appropriate professional guidance** – Even where there are designated programs that encourage Palestinian cinematic creation,

73 Including filmmaking, peer assessment boards, students and adults' workshops, and teaching and lecturing for various age groups.

as well as a desire and vision for the promotion of filmmakers from disadvantaged backgrounds, there are often social and cultural difficulties in carrying out such initiatives. *"There is not enough thought being put into what it means to guide a Palestinian female student, or even filmmaker, who never went to art school or studied at university; not enough thought about the sort of tools she was given, compared to her Jewish counterpart. It's just not the same"*.

- **Difficulty in accepting cinematic content created by Palestinian women filmmakers** – even when there is willingness and desire to bring the voices and worlds of Palestinian women filmmakers to the screen, more often than not, the filmmakers' experience is a complex one, either because of the film's spoken language (Arabic-speaking films) or social and political subjects which touch upon painful issues. *"I was invited to create a highly political work, and every time I touched upon any politics in the versions I handed in, which was directly related to the work's main topic, I was met with defensiveness and a lack of ability to accept what was written....These defense mechanisms exist in our social consciousness and permeate into one's private subconscious. There's a serious dissonance between wanting to 'give voice to the oppressed' and the road to allowing it to be heard, which is fraught with obstacles and is never simple"*.
- **Identity conflict** – the difficulties Abu Fraiha mentions also touch upon the films' funding and distribution. For example, in the case of Suha Arraf – the film received funding from the Israel Film Fund, but the director refused to define it as an Israeli film but rather as a personal, nationally non-defined film. The result: a public outcry and threats to pull the film's funding. According to **Shadi Ballan**, author of the book **A Palestinian Feature**: *"If you take Israeli funding money, your film will be considered Israeli, and you will burn yourself in the Arab world. There are directors who choose to do it because they have nowhere else to go for funding, especially if you want to access Europe"* (Daskal, 2019). For these reasons, there are only a few Palestinian filmmakers who are members in one of the industry's professional unions, and there are some, as previously mentioned, who prefer not to apply to Israel Film Funds. But Abu Fraiha claims: *"I wouldn't attribute the relatively low numbers of submissions as merely a Palestinian cultural boycott, even though some creators do follow that path. The gaps and difficulties begin, as said, long before the submissions are due"*.

Israeli LGBTQ Filmmakers

Lior Elefant

Since there is no empiric data regarding the sexual orientation of Israeli filmmakers, apart from the filmmakers' personal statements regarding it, it is difficult to ascertain their representation within the general filmmakers' community. Therefore, in this part of the report we will mainly discuss cinematic content rather than the filmmakers themselves, based on the notion that cinematic content and on-screen representations are directly affected by the creators' identity, but also affect the general public. Cinema creates a world of images with which we are supposed to identify, and from which we are supposed to learn something about ourselves. Representations of minority groups on the big screen are invaluable. Not just because society sees they exist and learns how to treat them, but also because by seeing themselves onscreen, women who belong to these minority groups learn who they are, build and design their identity and get legitimized or de-legitimized. Minority groups' films and filmmakers have an enormous impact on the young generation's goals and ambitions, who may perceive the images as future role models.

Israeli cinema, both features and documentaries, do not deal with the LGBTQ community often, neither as a community nor as individual characters. Up until the early part of the present millennium, there were so few films made on the issue, and mainly by filmmaker **Amos Guttman**, that, within the context of Israeli cinema, his films could be claimed as groundbreaking in every way. In order to encourage local LGBTQ filmmaking and offer a proper space for such films to be screened, two film festivals were set up between 2000-2010: **TLVFEST** – the Tel Aviv International LGBT Festival (2005) and **Lethal Lesbian** – an Israeli Lesbian Film Festival (2008).⁷⁴ These two festivals present full-length features and short films, both fiction and documentary, but whilst the TLVFEST presents both local as well as international films from filmmakers across the entire LGBTQ spectrum, Lethal Lesbian focuses entirely on local Israeli female-identified filmmakers. The TLVFEST receives a tiny budget from the Israeli Film Board, whereas Lethal Lesbian is an independent festival, sometimes subsidized by the Tel Aviv Municipality. These two Tel-Aviv based festivals encourage development and production of cinematic content through grants and networking opportunities, amongst other things, and both have had a crucial effect on the future

74 In full disclosure, the writer is one of the festival's directors.

of LGBTQ Israeli filmmaking and its growth in recent years. It is worth mentioning that LGBTQ-related films may also be screened in other film festivals across the country; however, the main reason for the establishment of these two festivals was the lack of screening platforms for such films.

Between 2013 and 2018, thirteen feature films dealing with LGBTQ-related themes or featuring LGBTQ-identified leads were screened in festivals and cinemas nationwide – less than 10% of the total number of feature films screened during these same years. The overwhelming majority of these films were created by LGBTQ-identified Israel filmmakers (**Eytan Fox, Tal Granit and Sharon Maymon, Dana Goldberg, Veronica Kedar, Limor Shmila, Michal Vinik** amongst others). During these same years, over twenty full-length documentaries were created by LGBTQ-identified filmmakers (**Liat Daudi, Tomer Heymann, Halit Levy, Yair Qedar and Avigail Sperber** amongst others).

When examining the winners of the Ophir Awards over the years, it is evident that only one film with a LGBTQ-identified lead role has won the Best Film Award – **The Cakemaker (Ofir Raul Graizer, 2018)**. In the documentary genre, three full-length documentaries featuring LGBTQ-identified characters have won the Ophir Award for Best Documentary – **Jonathan Agassi Saved My Life (Tomer Heymann, 2018)**, **Keep Not Silent (Ilil Alexander, 2004)**, and **Tomer Vehasrutim (Tomer Heymann, 2001)**. Three LGBTQ-themed films or films which feature a lead LGBTQ-identified character also won the Documentary Filmmakers Forum Awards – **Stefan Braun (Itamar Alcalay, 2008)**, **Probation (Avigail Sperber, 2014)**, and **My War Hero Uncle (Shaked Goren, 2019)**.

Based on existing data, it can be deduced that the types of blocks and challenges faced by the LGBTQ community may be similar to those faced by other minority groups – selection committees which are predominantly comprised of members from society's majority hegemonic groups and who often have difficulty identifying with and empathizing with minority groups' experiences; lack of positive onscreen representations and role models, and even the opposite – negative representations; sexual and gender-based harassment as well as employment discrimination on the basis of gender-identification and sexual orientation;⁷⁵ in addition, and this is

75 As we see in the report on the subject and from personal testimonies to which the filmmakers testified in their personal conversation with the writer (Kupfer, 2016: "Feelings and Experiences of

predominantly true in the case of trans men and women – the economic issue. Making films is expensive, and trans-identified community members are often of lower socio-economic status and more resources-limited.

In the case of LGBTQ-identified creators and films, On-screen and off-screen representation is critical, since violence and hatred towards its members is very much on the rise. The annual Israeli LGBTQ Hate Crimes Report,⁷⁶ published with the courtesy of the LGBTQ Association, demonstrates an alarming rise in the reports of hate crimes and acts of violence against community members, on Israeli mainstream media, amongst others. In such a grim reality, positive or at least authentic cinematic representations and films can save lives.

Discrimination against LGBTQ Employees in the Israeli Workforce, 2015". The Ministry of Economics and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.

76 The reports can be found here: [The Nir Katz Report Center of Hate Crimes Against LGBTQ Community Members in Israel](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS⁷⁷

1. The ratio of women in the film industry's main public bodies and institutions must be increased to ensure adequate budget allocations and proper representation. The presence of women in the funding bodies encourages women to apply and increases public funding for women filmmakers. The same applies to representations of other minority groups (such as Palestinians, Orthodox and Mizrahi filmmakers).⁷⁸ The relevant bodies are: the Ministry of Culture's Film Board, the public funds' boards of directors and assessment committees, as well as key institutions within the film industry such as the Israeli Academy of Film and Television, and film festivals' assessment committees and boards of directors.
2. It is advisable to conduct a systematic gender-based gathering and analysis of data regarding the percentage and number of grant submissions and the percentage of supported applications, at every stage, in every category of every fund, as well as gathering of information regarding applicants who made it to higher stages, and those who were granted financial support.
3. There needs to be a gender-based analysis of the film funds' budgets: an ongoing examination of the portion of the budget filmmakers receive in the various categories, similar to how it has been carried out in this report. For that purpose, a permanent database needs to be set up into which data is inserted annually. It is important to note that government decision 2084 from October 2014 requires all government offices and agencies to present a gender-based analysis of their budgets. Amongst other things, they are required to present a gender-based analysis of support budgets. Under the same rule, the Ministry of Culture is responsible to demand from its supported film funds that they present their gender-based analysis of their support budgets annually.

77 Our recommendations are partially based on the report of Aylett, Holly. 2016. *Where Are the Women Directors in European Films? Gender Equality Report on Female Directors, 2006–2013 with Best Practice and Policy Recommendations*. European Women's Audiovisual Network. Strasbourg.

78 The Heart at East Coalition conducted an analysis of this issue in 2012, resulting in a report titled "Bureaucracy of Inequality". The findings point to an under-representation of Arabs and Mizrahi on peer assessment boards, as well as under-representation of Mizrahi and Arab cultures when support of dance, opera, theatre, music, cultural research institutions and museums are concerned.

4. Due to the low ratio of women filmmakers in general, and the low ratio of women filmmakers who apply for public funds, it is advisable to set up, for a pre-determined period, budgetary affirmative action mechanisms similar to Canadian and Swedish models. In Sweden in 2011, women enjoyed 26% of the country's film support budget. The change occurred after policies were implemented and promoted, and encouragement programs were set up for women filmmakers across various fields, such as scriptwriting, production and directing. Consequently, the number of women filmmakers rose.⁷⁹ In Canada, in 2016, changes were made to the film budgets allocation policies with the goal of achieving gender balance in the industry's key roles: production, scriptwriting and directing.⁸⁰ The changes implemented in these countries were made through means similar to the recommendations outlined in this report. We suggest that a budgetary bar be set for the support of women filmmakers, gradually increasing over a five-year period: 30% in the first year, 40% in the second year and up to 50%.
5. It is advisable to make changes to the Cinema Budget's support assessments:
 - In light of the fact that the Cinema Budget's division is based on support assessments, we recommend stipulating the budget allocation to organizations, unions and film funds in accordance with the implementation of a gender mainstreaming program: looking at the budget itself as well as the organization as a whole. We recommend adding this suggestion as an amendment to the Cinema Law, as opposed to adding it to the assessments themselves, as these regularly change.
 - In the support assessments there is a clause which refers to the supported organization's Board of Directors, which suggests rewarding an organization that reaches full gender-balance in the number of male and female board members. We suggest this clause be turned into a mandatory support criterion.
 - In the clause referring to the film funds' websites, we recommend adding a demand for transparency of the submissions data, along with the rest of the data already appearing on the site.
 - In the clause referring to representation on assessment committees – today the adequate representation requirement totals 30%; we recommend this figure be gradually raised to 50%.
6. There is a need to expand encouragement programs for women filmmakers,

79 Women and Hollywood (18 February, 2016). "[How the Swedish Film Institute Achieved 50-50 Funding Distribution Between Male and Female Directors](#)". Women and Hollywood.

80 Telefilm Canada (11 November, 2016). "[Telefilm Canada Announces, in Partnership with the Industry, Gender Parity Measures for Feature Film Production Financing](#)". Telefilm Canada.

such as film labs, mentorship programs, women's film festivals and professional guidance in the application process to public film funds. These may be offered not just to directors and scriptwriters but to all on-set professions such as women cinematographers, lighting designers, etc. Encouragement programs that are within the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Sports should be subjected to ongoing assessment, including an analysis and examination of the integration of graduates of these support programs in the film industry.

7. Another means by which to handle the industry's Occupational Segregation is to encourage women to take on technical professions and encourage men to take on professions which are considered feminine, namely makeup and casting. We recommend that the professional guilds offer women-only workshops in cinematography, sound, lighting, etc.
8. In order to ease off some of the difficulty in balancing between career and family life, we recommend setting up on-set parents' support arrangements (such as a designated nursing area) as well as including daycare expenses in the production's budget. It is worth mentioning that the Directors' Guild has already begun working on a similar project, yet to be implemented.
9. Use of gender-balanced language:
 - Application callouts on the film funds' websites and general callouts that are advertised from time to time should be gender-neutral and address all genders.
 - Role descriptions in production budgets, films and television series' credit rolls must be updated to suit current gender-equality ethics. For example: Script Supervisor rather than "Script Girl" (as it is currently called in Israeli productions), Production Assistants rather than "Water Girl" (as it is currently called in Israeli productions). We also recommend that the budgets' role sheets be gender-neutral and address all genders.
10. Holding annual conferences on the film industry's gender-inequality in order to raise the awareness around the issues, in conjunction with the professional guilds and the film board.

The Israeli Women in Film and Television Forum will be happy to cooperate, advise and support any practical application of each of the above-mentioned recommendations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acker, Joan. 1990. "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations". **Gender and Society**, 4(2): 139-158.

Acker, Joan. 2006. "Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations". **Gender and Society**, 20(4): 441-464.

Act. "The Convention for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment". [Act website](#) (Hebrew).

Anderman, Nirit, (9th of September, 2013), "Challenging the Male Hegemony of Israel's Movie Industry", **Haaretz**.

Anderman, Nirit, (17th of October, 2017), "#MeToo Shakes Up Israeli TV and Film Industry as Victims of Harassment Speak Out", **Haaretz**.

Aylett, Holly. 2016. Where Are the Women Directors in European Films? Gender Equality Report on Female Directors, 2006-2013 with Best Practice and Policy Recommendations. European Women's Audiovisual Network. Strasbourg.

Benschop, Yvonne. 2009. "The Micro-Politics of Gendering in Networking". **Gender, Work & Organization**, 16(2): 217-237.

Bin Nun, Sagi, (7th of September 2016), "The Film Industry's Professional Guilds and the Film and Television Industry professionals signed a convention against Sexual Harassment", **Walla** (Hebrew).

Blair, Helen. 2001. "You're Only as Good as Your Last Job": the Labour Process and Labour Market in British Film Industry". **Work, Employment & Society**, 15(1): 149-169.

Blair, Helen, Nigel Culkin & Keith Randle. 2003. "From London to Los Angeles: A Comparison of Local Labour Market Processes in the US and UK Film Industry". **International Journal of Human Resource Management**, 14(4): 619-633.

Center for the Study of Women in Television & Film. "[About Us](#)".

Connolly, Maeve. 2020. "Women Cinematographers and Changing Irish Production Cultures". In Susan Liddy (Ed.), **Women in the Irish Film Industry: Stories and Storytellers**. Cork University Press. 94-107.

Danard, Benoît. (2018). [Femmes et Cinema: Réalisation, Production, Formation](#). France: CNC.

Daskal, Shlomi, (6th of November 2019), "Conquering of the Soul", [The Seventh Eye](#) (Hebrew).

EWA - European Women's Audiovisual Network. 2014. "Where are the Women Directors? Report on Gender Equality for Directors in the European Film Industry".

Florio, Angelica (8 March 2018). "The Reason Why so Many More Women Direct Docs than Narrative is Infuriating". [Bustle](#).

Follows, Stephen, Alexis Kreager & Eleanor Gomes. 2016. **Cut Out of the Picture: A Study of Gender Inequality amongst Film Directors in the UK Film Industry**. Directors UK. .

Gill, Rosalind. 2014. "Unspeakable Inequalities: Post Feminism, Entrepreneurial Subjectivity, and the Repudiation of Sexism among Cultural Workers". **Social Politics**, 21(4): 509-528.

Hasson Yael and Noga Dagan-Buzaglo, 2013. "[Occupational Segregation and Gender Pay Gaps](#)". **Adva Center** (Hebrew).

Jones, Deborah & Judith K. Pringle. 2015. "Unmanageable Inequalities: Sexism in the Film Industry". **The Sociological Review**, 63(1): 37-49.

- Lauzen, Martha. M. 1998. "Employment and Equality: Assessing the Status of Women in the Top 100 Films of 1987, 1992, & 1997".
- Lauzen, Martha. M. 2019. "It's a Man's (Celluloid) World: Portrayals of Female Characters in the Top Grossing Films of 2018". Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA.
- Levitt, Daniel, Catherine Shoard & Seán Clarke (6 February, 2020). "Oscars: The 92-Year Gender Gap, Visualized." **The Guardian**.
- Liddy, Susan (Ed). 2020. **Women in the Irish Film Industry: Stories and Storytellers**. Cork University Press.
- Loist, Skadi & Elizabeth Prommer. 2019. "Gendered Production Culture in the German Film Industry". **Media Industries Journal**, 6(1): 95-115.
- Lubin, Orly. 1992. "From Periphery to the Center: The Subversiveness of the Ma'abarot Films". **Zmanim** 39-40, 1991 (Hebrew).
- Lubin, Orly, 1998. **Fictive Looks on Israeli Cinema**, Nurith Gertz, Orly Lubin, Judd Ne'eman - 1998 - Open University of Israel. P223-246 (Hebrew).
- Lubin, Orly, 1998. **Women, Nationalism and Ethnicity**, p120-127.
- McGuire, Gail M. 2000. "Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Networks: The Factors Affecting the Status of Employees' Network Members". **Work and Occupations**, 27(4): 501-524.
- Redvall, Eva Novrup & Inge Ejbye Sørensen. 2018. "Hard Facts, Soft Measures: Gender, Quality and Inequality Debates in Danish Film and Television in the 2010s." **Journal of Scandinavian Cinema**, 8(3): 233-249.
- Sarkisian, Jacob (8 January, 2020). "Oscars and BAFTAs Gender Gap Study: There are More Male Winners than Female Nominees." **Goldderby**.
- Screen Australia. 2015. **Gender Matters: Women in the Australian Screen Industry**.
- Shaer-Meoded Israela. 2016. "The Unknown Cinema: on Early Women's Cinema in Israel" (1969-1983). submitted by Israela Shaer Meoded; supervised by Prof. Raz Yosef (Hebrew).
- Shohat Ella. 1991. **Israeli Cinema: History and Ideology**. From English: Anat Glikman, Tel Aviv, Breirot Publishing (Hebrew).
- Shohat Ella. 1993. "Making the Silent Speak", **Israeli Society: Critical Perspectives**, Uri Ram (Editor), Tel Aviv, Breirot Publishing, p 245-252 (Hebrew).
- Smith, Stacy L., Katherine Pieper & Marc Choueiti. 2017. "Inclusion in the Director's Chair? Gender, Race, & Age of Film Directors: Across 1,000 Films from 2007-2016". USC ANNEBERG School for Communication and Journalism.
- The Commission for Equal Opportunities in the Workforce, July 2020. "Variability Index, Pay and Representation in Public and Private Sectors, fourth edition". (Hebrew).
- Uğur Tanrıöver, Hulya. 2017. "Women as Film Directors in Turkish Cinema". **European Journal of Women's Studies**, 24(4):321-335.
- Vinig, Marlyn, 2011. **Orthodox Cinema**. Tel Aviv: Resling (Hebrew).
- Wreyford, Natalie. 2015. "Birds of a Feather: Informal Recruitment Practices and Gendered Outcomes for Screenwriting Work in the UK Film Industry". In Conor, Bridget, Rosalind Gill & Stephanie Taylor (Eds.), **Gender and Creative Labour**. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 84-96.
- Wreyford, Natalie & Shelly Cobb. 2017. "Data and Responsibility: Toward a Feminist Methodology for Producing Historical Data on Women in the Contemporary UK Film Industry". **Feminist Media Histories**, 3(3): 107-132.

Bibliography - Hebrew

- איגוד הבמאיות והבמאים (27 בפברואר, 2019). "מבחי הממייכה בתחום הקולנוע". אתר איגוד הבמאיות והבמאים.
- איגוד הבמאיות והבמאים (25 ביוני, 2020). "קול קורא: חממת קולנוע תעודי לנשים יוצרות". אתר איגוד הבמאיות והבמאים.
- איגוד מקצועות האנימציה (אין תאריך). "נרשמים עכשיו למאגר הלקטורים של מועצת הקולנוע". אתר איגוד מקצועות האנימציה.
- אלפנט, ליאור (14 באוקטובר, 2014). "בדרך לאוסקר משלמים הרבה מאד כסף". העוקץ.
- אנדרמן, נירית (10 באוקטובר, 2013). "לאן נעלמה הבמאית הראשונה של הקולנוע הישראלי?". הארץ.
- בר-חיים, גבי (31 באוקטובר, 2014). "אפקט מיוחד". 7 לילות.
- בר סתו, ליאת (6 ביוני, 2020). "נבהלתי מזה שיש אנשים שיכולים להאשים ילדה בת 14 בקשר עם מבוגר בר סמכות". מאקו.
- האקדמיה הישראלית לקולנוע וטלוויזיה (מרץ, 2014). "תקנון פרס הסרט הקצר". אתר האקדמיה הישראלית לקולנוע וטלוויזיה.
- הקרן החדשה לקולנוע וטלוויזיה (10 באוקטובר, 2019). "חממת נשים לפיתוח תסריטים עלילתיים". הקרן החדשה לקולנוע וטלוויזיה.
- והבה-שאשו גלית, דוד אלכסנדר, דבורה הנדלר, הני זוביידה, אודליה מינס, ליאור גלבו, ונדב משעלי. 2018. דו"ח מסכם – הועדה לבחינת התנהלות קרנות הקולנוע. משרד התרבות והספורט.
- זמיר, סמדר. "גירסת הבמאית", בלוג.
- חכמוב, עמית (18 באפריל 2018). "70 שנות קולנוע ישראלי ורק חמש נשים צלמות פעילות". אונלייף – אתר תוכן ואקטואליה לנשים.
- חסון, יעל. 2017. הערות על הניתוח המגדרי של תקציבי משרדי הממשלה לשנים 2017-2018. תל אביב, מרכז אדוה.
- כהן, מאיה (3 בספטמבר, 2020). "אסי לוי: משה אבגי נישק אותי בכפייה". ישראל היום.
- כרמלי אברהם ומנחם לזר. 2014. קולנוע בישראל 2012 – סיכום הפעילות השנתית. המרכז למידע ומחקר של מנהל תרבות, מופעל על ידי פילת.
- כרמלי אברהם ומנחם לזר. 2014. קולנוע בישראל 2013 – סיכום הפעילות השנתית. המרכז למידע ומחקר של מנהל תרבות, מופעל על ידי פילת.
- כרמלי אברהם והילה מימון. 2015. קולנוע בישראל 2014 – סיכום הפעילות השנתית. המרכז למידע ומחקר של מנהל תרבות, מופעל על ידי פילת.
- כרמלי אברהם והילה מימון. 2016. קולנוע בישראל 2015 – סיכום הפעילות השנתית. המרכז למידע ומחקר של מנהל תרבות, מופעל על ידי פילת.
- כרמלי אברהם ויסכה יעקב. 2017. קולנוע בישראל 2016 – סיכום הפעילות השנתית. המרכז למידע ומחקר של מנהל תרבות, מופעל על ידי פילת.
- לביא, מיכל (ספטמבר, 2020). "על כיסא הבמאי יושבת סמדר". מחברות קולנוע דרום 2020.
- לובין, אורלי. 2000. "מטריטוריה לאתר: נשיות מזרחית בסרט 'ג'קי'". ביקורת ופרשנות 34: 177-193.
- מכללת ספיר (ספטמבר 2020). "כל סרט צריך אחות".
- סיגולי, אור (8 במרץ, 2017). "לא בפוקוס: הנסיכה על העדשה". כלכליסט.
- פורטנוי ישי רינה ורמי בן שלום. 2019. קולנוע בישראל 2017 – סיכום הפעילות השנתית. המרכז למידע ומחקר של מנהל תרבות, מופעל על ידי אדיוסיסטמס.

Appendix 1: Ophir Awards, Gendered Breakdown of Wins, 1999-2019

In Percentages, Out of Total in Each Category, in Ascending Order of the Women's Wins Column

	Nominations		Wins	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Makeup (2011-2019)	5%	95%	--	100%
Casting (2012-2019)	11%	89%	--	100%
Costume Design (2001-2019)	19%	81%	10%	90%
Short Documentary: Production (2014-2019)	51%	49%	27%	73%
Short Documentary: Directing (2014-2019)	54%	46%	33%	67%
Short Narrative: Directing (2013-2019)	57%	43%	50%	50%
Editing (2000-2019)	51%	49%	52%	48%
Short Narrative: Production (2013-2019)	58%	42%	67%	33%
Full-Length Documentary: Production	66%	34%	76%	24%
Full-Length Documentary: Directing	72%	28%	83%	17%
Directing	85%	15%	86%	14%
Scriptwriting	78%	22%	87%	13%
Full-Length Narrative Feature: Directing	83%	17%	87%	13%
Full-Length Narrative Feature: Production	81%	19%	88%	12%
Lifetime Achievement Award	N.D	N.D	90%	10%
Professional Achievements Award	N.D	N.D	93%	7%
Production Design (2001-2019)	85%	15%	95%	5%
Cinematography (2000-2019)	97%	3%	100%	--
Original Music (2000-2019)	94%	6%	100%	--
Sound Design (2001-2019)	98%	2%	100%	--

Notes:

- (1) The date refers to the years 1999-2019 unless specified otherwise.
- (2) The wins categories that have been taken into consideration are: man, woman, a man and a woman, two men, two women, three men, three women, four men, five men. Categories which have not been taken into consideration are: two men and a woman, two women and one man, three man and a woman, four men and a woman, four men and two women, four men and three women.
- (3) The Professional Achievements Awards has not been given during the years: 1992-94, 1996, 2008, 2010-2013 and 2015.

I SBN 978-965-92896-0-8



9 789659 289608

THE CELLULOID CEILING
A GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS OF
THE ISRAELI FILM INDUSTRY

February 2021