

The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 250 Films of 2008

by Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D.

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In 2008, women comprised 16% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films. This represents a decline of 3 percentage points from 2001 and an increase of 1 percentage point from 2007 (see Figure 1).

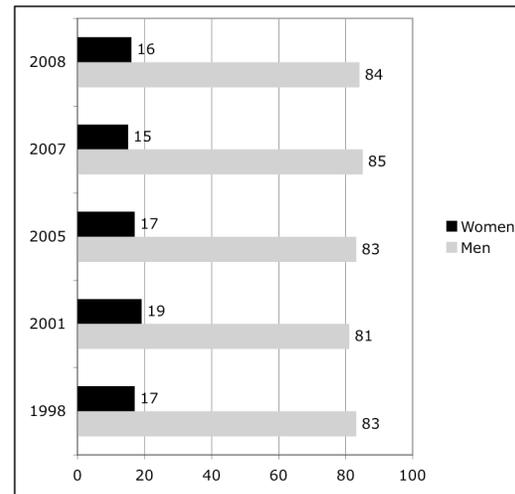
Women accounted for 9% of directors in 2008, an increase of 3 percentage points from 2007. This figure represents no change from the percentage of women directing in 1998.

The following summary provides employment figures for 2008 and compares the most recent statistics with those from the last 10 years.

Findings

- This study analyzed behind-the-scenes employment of 2,706 individuals working on the top 250 domestic grossing films (foreign films omitted) of 2008 with combined domestic box office grosses of approximately \$9.4 billion.
- Twenty two percent (22%) of the films released in 2008 employed no

Figure 1.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of
Women Employed in Key Behind-the-
Scenes Roles*

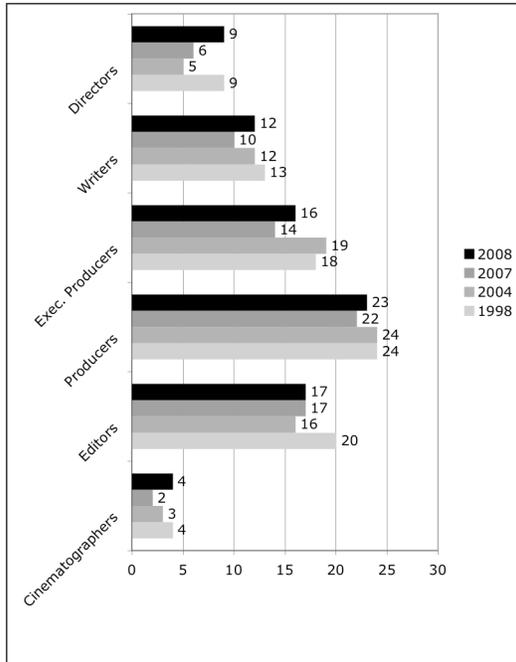


*includes directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers

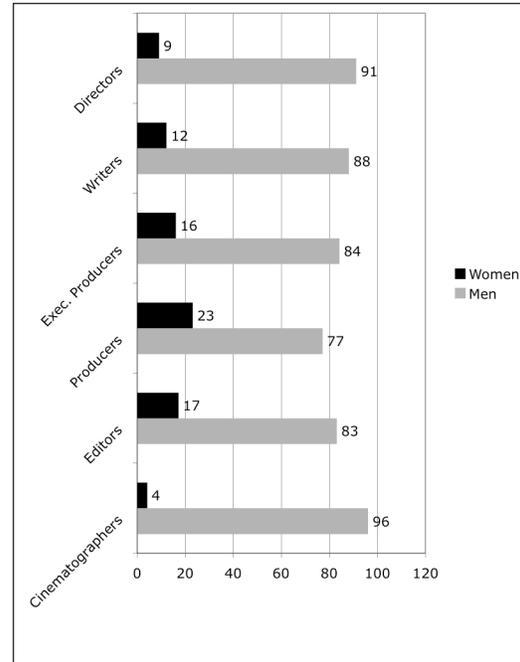
women directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, or editors. No films failed to employ a man in at least one of these roles.

- A historical comparison of women's employment on the top 250 films in 2008 and 1998 reveals that the percentages of women directors and cinematographers have remained stable, whereas the percentages of women writers, executive producers, producers, and editors have declined slightly (see Figure 2).
- Women comprised 9% of all directors working on the top 250 films of 2008. Ninety percent

*Figure 2.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of
Women Employed Behind the Scenes on
Top 250 Films by Role*



*Figure 3.
Comparison of Percentages of Women
and Men Employed on Top 250 Films of
2007*



(90%) of the films had no female directors (see Figure 3).

- Women accounted for 12% of writers working on the top 250 films of 2008. Eighty two percent (82%) of the films had no female writers.
- Women comprised 16% of all executive producers working on the top 250 films of 2008 (see Figure 3). Sixty five percent (65%) of the films had no female executive producers.
- Women accounted for 23% of all producers working on the top 250 films of 2008. Forty three percent (43%) of the films had no female producers.

- Women accounted for 17% of all editors working on the top 250 films of 2008. Seventy nine percent (79%) of the films had no female editors.
- Women comprised 4% of all cinematographers working on the top 250 films of 2008. Ninety six percent (96%) of the films had no female cinematographers.

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