

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Women Directors: Movies and Television

Elisa Leonelli · Wednesday, January 3rd, 2018

I was impressed by several movies and TV shows directed and created by women in 2017, that seem relevant to our times.



Wonder Woman by [Patty Jenkins](#), who had directed *Monster* (2003) starring Charlize Theron, is the origin story of Diana, princess of the Amazons, who leaves the island paradise where she was raised to find Ares, the God of War, and help mankind put an end to World War I in 1918 Belgium.

Gal Gadot, the Israeli actress, had been cast by Zack Snyder to join the iconic DC Comics superheroes in *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016) and also appeared in *Justice League* (2017).

Jenkins said: “I saw this as a beautiful opportunity to say to the world that Wonder Woman stands for love, she’s capable of violence but doesn’t relish it. She is powerful and strong, but good and beautiful. She became a symbol of power but also of femininity.”



Professor Marston and the Wonder Women-Bella Heathcote, Rebecca Hall (c) Annapurna

Professor Marston and the Wonder Women, written and directed by [Angela Robinson](#), tells the story behind the creation of Wonder Woman for DC Comics in 1941. Dr. William Moulton Marston (Luke Evans), Psychology professor at Radcliffe, Harvard’s women college, taught his DISC Theory, which stands for dominance, inducement, submission and compliance. He believed that men were inherently violent, while women were loving and nurturing. He was inspired by his wife Elizabeth (Rebecca Hall) and by Olive (Bella Heathcote), a student who lived with the couple in a polyamorous relationship involving bondage.

Robinson said: “Wonder Woman is the only superhero who was created to stop war with a message of peace. Marston believed that women were the superior sex and they should be running the world. He created a feminine superhero with all the strength of Superman, plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman, a model of the liberated woman. We finished shooting the film before the election and we all thought we were going to have our first female President.”



The Zookeeper’s Wife-Jessica Chastain (c) Focus

The Zookeeper's Wife, directed by [Niki Caro](#) from the 2007 book by Diane Ackerman, is the true story of Antonina Zabinska (Jessica Chastain), who hid hundreds of Jews in the Warsaw Zoo she ran with her husband, in 1939 Poland during the Nazi Germany occupation.

Caro, born in New Zealand, who had directed *Whale Rider* (2002) and *North Country* (2005) starring Charlize Theron, said: “It’s really the story of how Antonina fought that darkness with her own kind of light, which was all about love and compassion. The way she provided sanctuary was so very female. I’m lucky and grateful to be working, but the fact that there are so many female film-makers not working hurts me tremendously. I am angry at the radical waste of skill and talent; all of those voices must be heard, things have to change.”

Mudbound, directed by [Dee Rees](#) from the 2008 novel by Hillary Jordan, is about the lives of two farming families in Mississippi after World War II, one headed by a white woman (Carey Mulligan), the other by a black woman (Mary J. Blige), and about the horrifying racist violence of the Ku Klux Klan.

Detroit by [Kathryn Bigelow](#), who had directed *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012) starring Jessica Chastain, is about a true incident at the Algiers Motel during the 1967 riots, when racists policemen tortured and killed several black men.



Lady Bird, written and directed by [Greta Gerwig](#), is about the life of an 18-year-old high school student (Saoirse Ronan) in 2002 Sacramento, her relationship with her mother and father (Laurie Metcalf, Tracy Letts) and two boyfriends (Lucas Hedges, Timothée Chalamet).

First They Killed My Father, directed by Angelina Jolie from the 2000 memoir by Loung Ung, is about the brutal Khmer Rouge regime in 1970s Cambodia, as told through the eyes of a little girl.

The Divine Order, written and directed by Petra Volpe, is about the women of a small village in Switzerland going on strike to support female suffrage in 1971.



I Love Dick-Kathryn Hahn (c) Amazon

Jill Soloway, creator of the Amazon series *Transparent* (2014-2016), created *I Love Dick* about artist Chris Kraus (Kathryn Hahn), who turns into art her sexual obsession for a sculptor (Kevin Bacon) who founded an artistic community in Marfa, Texas.

Soloway said: “*Transparent* is like an origin story and *Dick* is the future. Five years ago, it never would have occurred to us that Donald Trump would be President. I guess that means anybody, maybe Amy Schumer, could be President in five years.”



Better Things-Pamela Adlon (c) FX

[Pamela Adlon](#) wrote and directed the second season of her autobiographical comedy series *Better Things*, where she plays an actress, the divorced mother of three daughters.

Adlon said: “My show is female, that’s my world, my house is very estrogen heavy. I believe that you can’t be self-conscious about your life, your parenting, your looks, how you’re aging; if you

take it on in a healthy way, then all you can do is achieve great things. I have my own show, I employ people, I'm making art. It's incredible, my life has completely cracked open.”

[Tig Notaro](#) wrote the second season of the autobiographical Amazon series *One Mississippi*. The stand-up comedian included a scene about a male radio producer masturbating behind the desk during a meeting with a young female employee (Stephanie Alynne), an intended reference to Louis C.K.

Notaro said “Sadly, I’ve come to learn that Louis C.K.’s victims are not only real, but many are actual friends of mine within the comedy community.”

In the movie *I Love You Daddy*, written and directed by Louis.C.K., Pamela Adlon plays the comedian’s former wife, who teaches this man how to be a better father to his teenage daughter (Chloë Grace Moretz) from a previous marriage, who has a crush on a director (John Malkovich) modeled after Woody Allen.

On November 10, Adlon issued this statement: “My family and I are devastated and in shock after the admission of abhorrent behavior by my friend and partner, Louis C.K. I feel deep sorrow and empathy for the women who have come forward.”

My opinion is that women (and men) could say no to unwanted sexual advances and leave, unless they are threatened by force. Nevertheless, if they didn’t do that at the time, it’s good if they come out and reveal what happened later. It will warn these abusive men that their behavior will no longer be tolerated, even if they are the President of the United States.

I don’t believe we should erase the work of excellent actors like Kevin Spacey from a movie already completed, *All the Money in the World*, where he was replaced by Christopher Plummer as Paul Getty. But it was Ridley Scott’s decision and he is the director.

Hopefully *I Love You Daddy* will be released online for everyone who wishes to see it. I watched it and found it interesting.

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