



By Margaret Evans, Editor

Remember about a year ago, when everybody was talking about the “gender gap” in Hollywood? No? Well, that’s probably because you live in Beaufort, SC – not Hollywood – and you have a job and a life and such. And possibly because you’re not obsessed with movies, like I am.

So you’ll just have to take my word for it. Everybody who *is* obsessed with movies – like I am – was talking about the gender gap in Hollywood.

Variety

published an article with the headline “Women Comprise 7% of Directors on Top 250 Films.” Jennifer Lawrence penned an essay that quickly went viral, called “Why Do I Make Less Than My Male Co-Stars”? In doing so, she joined a host of veteran actors like Meryl Streep, Emma Thompson, Helen Mirren, and Sandra Bullock, all of whom were publically denouncing sexism in the movie industry.

But that was Hollywood and this is Beaufort. The 11th Annual Beaufort International Film Festival starts February 15th, and it paints a much rosier picture for the future of women in film.

BIFF's Year of the Woman

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“Once the finalists were selected and we were preparing the film descriptions for the



press, we noticed that most of the films had either female directors or producers . . . or both,” says festival director Ron Tucker. “We quickly – if unofficially – named BIFF 2017 ‘The Year of the Women Filmmakers.’”

Four of BIFF’s six feature films were directed by women – that’s closer to 70% than 7 – and 12 other films spanning the categories of Short, Student, and Animated have women at the helm. Nobody set out to engineer this result. None of the judges were given a mandate to select “the best films made by women.” As always, they were simply instructed to select the best films.

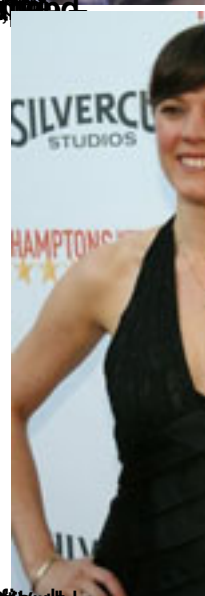
Two of the seven selected screenplays in BIFF ’17 were also written by women. And Julie Dash, the trailblazing director of the award-winning “Daughters of the Dust” – first African-American woman director to have a film in general release to theatres – will be receiving the inaugural Robert Smalls Merit & Achievement Award.

Is BIFF’s Year of the Woman a sign of changing times? Should we draw the improbable – but not impossible – conclusion that As Goes Beaufort, So Goes The World?

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