

25th Anniversary

The Celluloid Ceiling: ***Employment of Behind-the-Scenes Women on Top Grossing*** ***U.S. Films in 2022***

by Dr. Martha M. Lauzen

Copyright © 2023 – All rights reserved.

In 2022, the film industry continued to recuperate from the effects of the pandemic. While domestic box office grosses climbed out of the cellar last year, aided by juggernauts such as *Avatar: The Way of Water*, *Top Gun: Maverick*, and *Jurassic World: Dominion*, they have yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. Netflix seemed to turn convention on its head by using the brief theatrical release of *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* to build interest for its streaming business, and a standard window for theatrical releases appears to be a relic of the past.

How have women fared in this rapidly changing environment ruled by uncertainty and tightening budgets? This year's *Celluloid Ceiling* report seeks to answer this question by examining women's employment on the top grossing films of 2022.

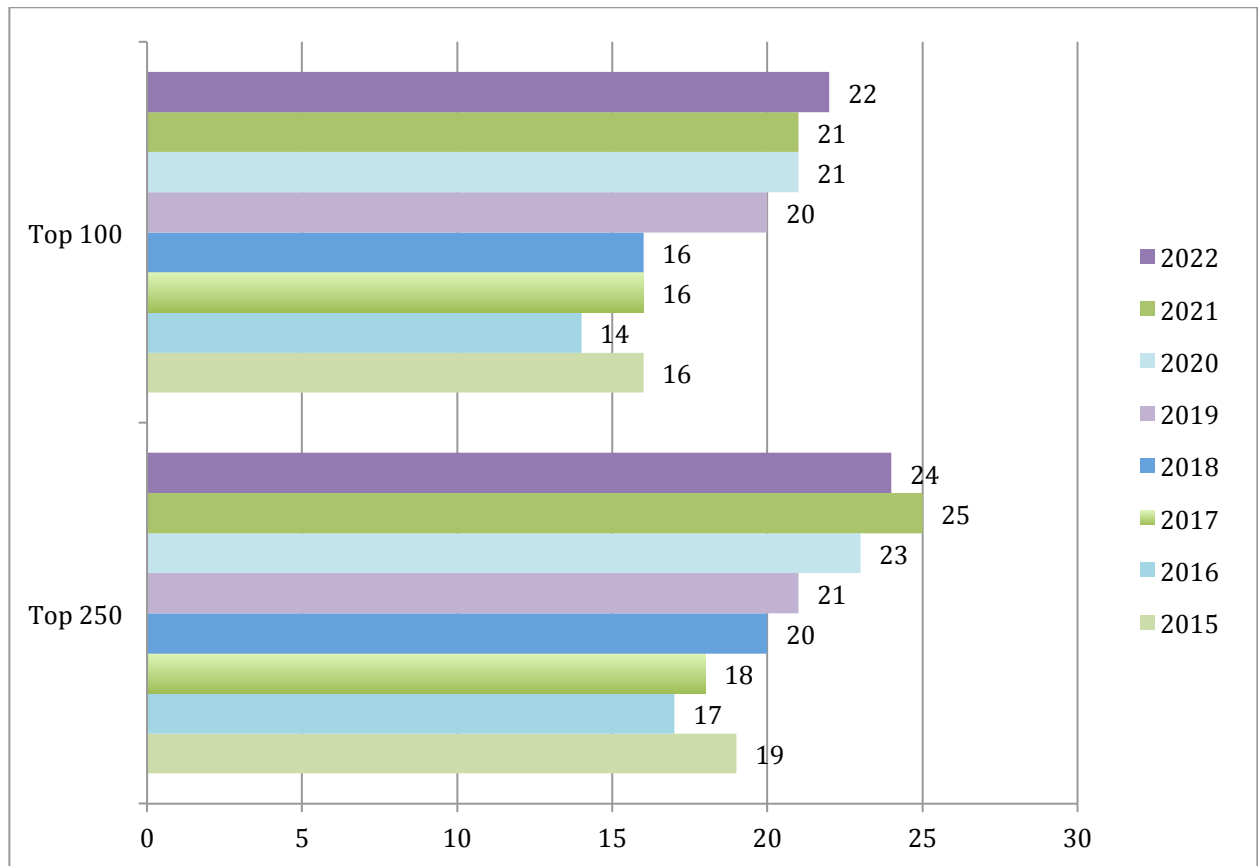
The Celluloid Ceiling has tracked women's employment on the 250 top grossing films for the last 25 years. Having monitored credits for a quarter of a century, the project provides the longest-running and most comprehensive record of women's behind-the-scenes representation available. This year's study examines women's employment on the top 100 and 250 (domestic) grossing films of 2022. Women's employment on original feature-length films released by streaming services will be considered in a separate report. These analyses document and inform our understanding of women's continuing underemployment in key behind-the-scenes roles in film.

Key Findings

•In 2022, women comprised 24% of directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 250 grossing films. This represents a decline of 1 percentage point from 25% in 2021. The percentage of women working on the top 100 films increased one percentage point from 21% in 2021, to 22% in 2022 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Comparison of Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes Women on Top 100 and 250 Films*

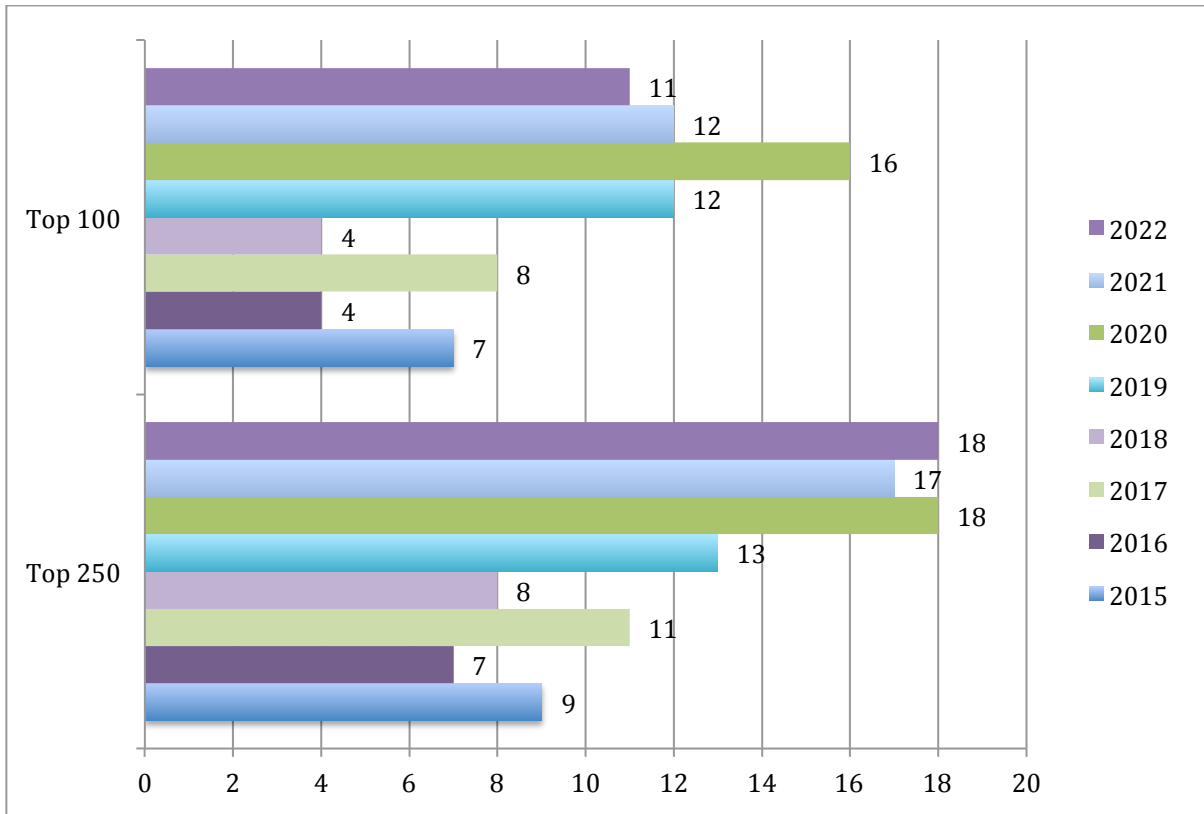


*includes directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, cinematographers

•Women accounted for 18% of directors working on the top 250 films in 2022, up 1 percentage point from 17% in 2021, and even with the percentage achieved in 2020. Women comprised 11% of directors working on the top 100 films of 2022, down 1 percentage point from 12% in 2021 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Comparison of Percentages of Women Directors Working on the Top 100 and 250 Films



•In other roles, women comprised 19% of writers, 25% of executive producers, 31% of producers, 21% of editors, and 7% of cinematographers on the top 250 films.

•In 2022, 93% of the top 250 films had no women cinematographers, 91% had no women composers, 80% had no women directors, 75% had no women editors, and 70% had no women writers.

•In 2022, the majority of the top 250 films (67%) employed 0 to 4 women in the roles considered, 24% of films employed 5 to 9 women, and 9% employed 10 or more women. In contrast, 5% of films employed 0 to 4 men in the roles considered, 18% employed 5 to 9 men, and the remaining majority (77%) employed 10 or more men.

- Films with at least one woman director employed substantially more women in other key behind-the-scenes roles than films with exclusively male directors. On films with at least one woman director, women comprised 53% of writers, 39% of editors, 19% of cinematographers, and 18% of composers. On films with male directors, women accounted for 12% of writers, 19% of editors, 4% of cinematographers, and 6% of composers (top 250 films).

Background

For the last 25 years, *The Celluloid Ceiling* has tracked women's employment on the top 250 grossing films (international films and re-issues omitted). In later years, the study also considered the top 100 films, and until 2020 the top 500 films.

The results of the study are divided into two major sections. The first section reports the findings for the top 250 (domestic) grossing films, offering comparisons of percentages from 2022 with figures dating from 1998. Due to the closure of many theaters during the pandemic, comparisons between numbers from the most affected years -- 2021 and 2020 -- and previous years should be made with caution. This year's report monitored over 2,800 credits on the top grossing films. Since 1998, the study has tracked more than 78,000 behind-the-scenes credits.

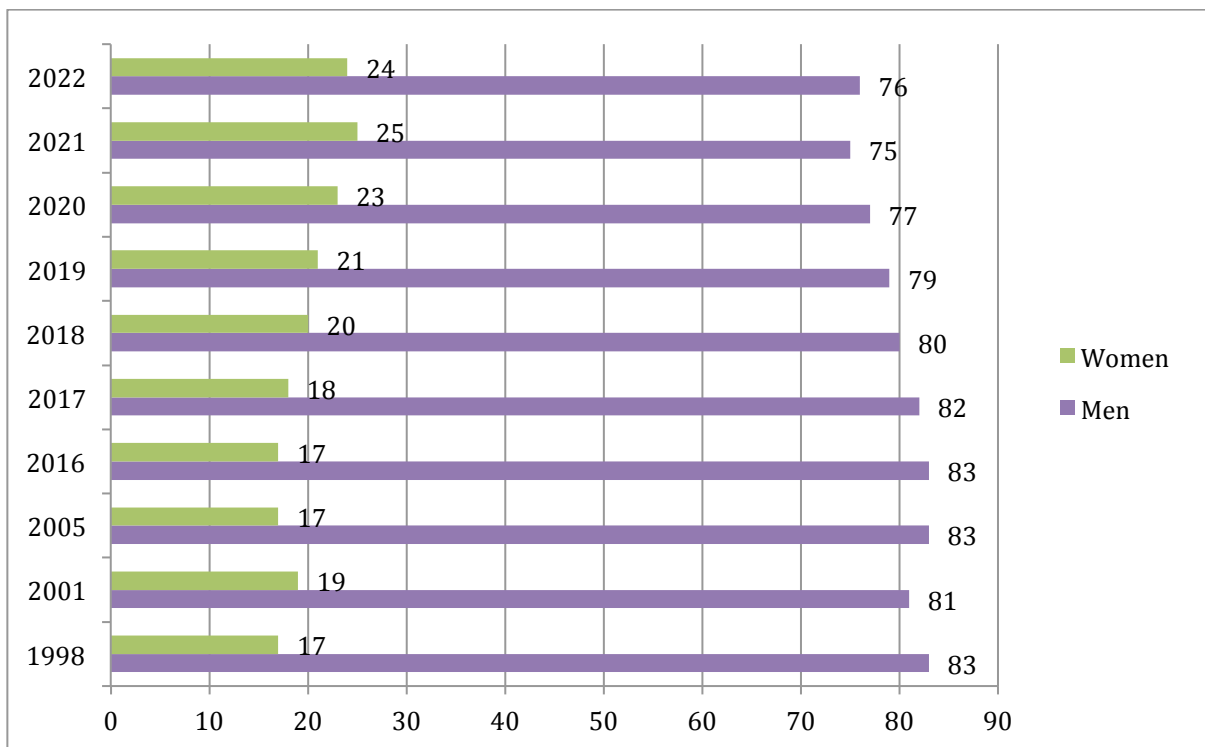
The second section provides the numbers for the top 100 (domestic) grossing films, comparing this year's figures with those from 1980, 1990, 2010, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. Figures for the top grossing films are based on numbers obtained from Box Office Mojo on January 1, 2023.

Findings / Top 250 Films

Women comprised 24% of all directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 250 films of 2022. This represents a decline of 1 percentage point from 2021, and an increase of only 7 percentage points since 1998 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes Women on Top 250 Films



When the limited number of documentaries are removed from the analysis, the percentage of women working in the roles considered remains unchanged at 24%.

Women fared best as producers (31%), followed by executive producers (25%), editors (21%), writers (19%), directors (18%), and cinematographers (7%).

In 2022, the majority of films (67%) employed 0 to 4 women in the roles considered, 24% of films employed 5 to 9 women, and 9% employed 10 or more

women. In contrast, 5% of films employed 0 to 4 men in the roles considered, 18% employed 5 to 9 men, and the remaining majority (77%) employed 10 or more men.

Women comprised 18% of all directors working on the top 250 films of 2022, up 1 percentage point from 17% in 2021. Taking the long view, this represents an increase of 9 percentage points from 9% in 1998 (see Figure 4). When the limited number of documentaries are removed from the analysis, women accounted for 16% of directors.

Films with at least one woman director employed substantially more women in other key behind-the-scenes roles than films with exclusively male directors. On films with at least one woman director, women comprised 53% of writers, 39% of editors, 19% of cinematographers, and 18% of composers. On films with male directors, women accounted for 12% of writers, 19% of editors, 4% of cinematographers, and 6% of composers. These differences are non-trivial.

Women accounted for 19% of all writers working on the top 250 films of 2022, up 2 percentage points from 17% in 2021. Taking the long view, this represents an increase of 6 percentage points from 13% in 1998. When documentaries are removed from the analysis, women comprised 18% of writers.

Women made up 25% of all executive producers working on the top 250 films of 2022, down 1 percentage point from 26% in 2021. Taking the long view, this represents an increase of 7 percentage points from 18% in 1998. When documentaries are removed from the analysis, the percentage of women executive producers remains unchanged.

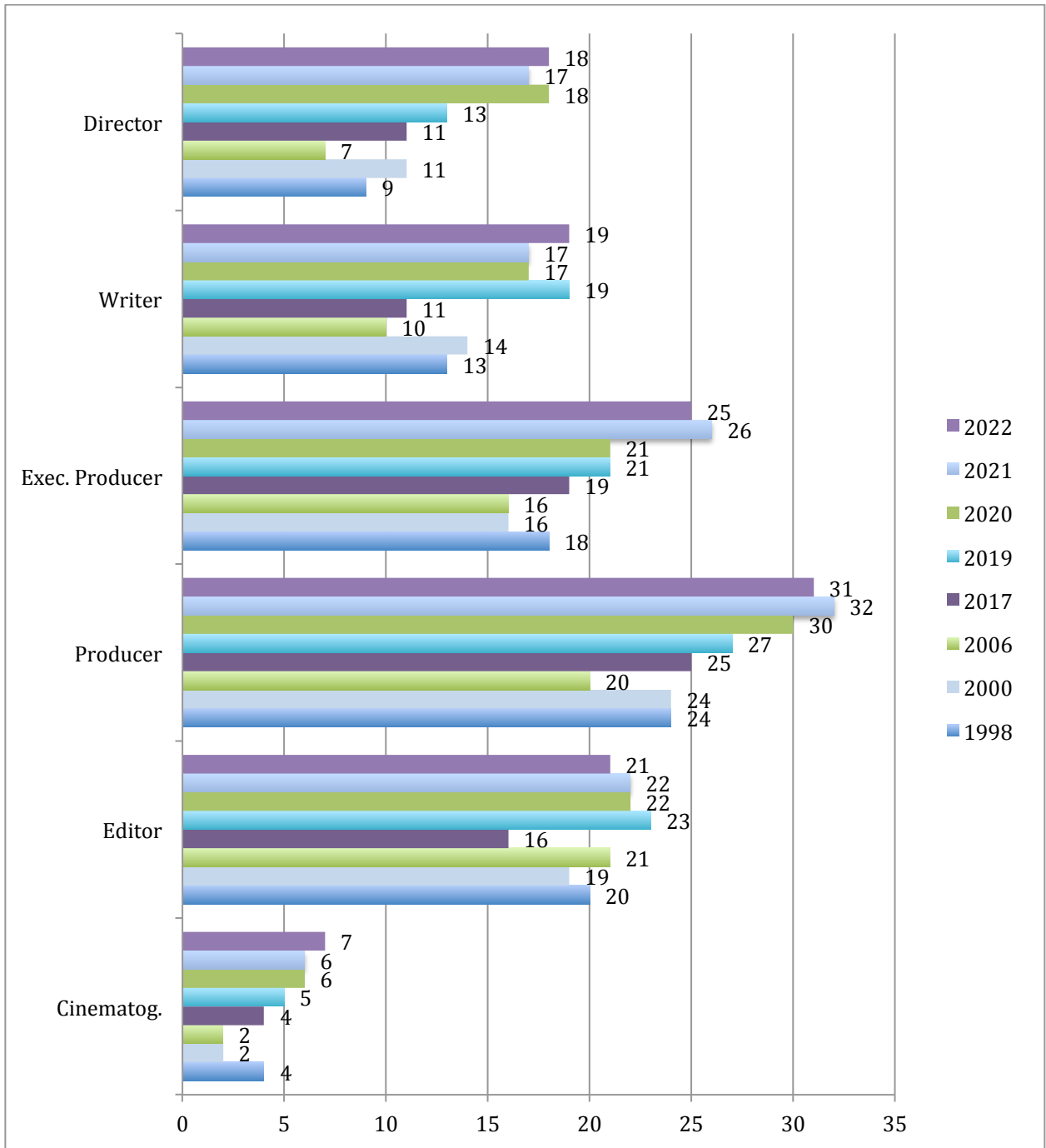
Women comprised 31% of all producers working on the top 250 films of 2022, a decrease of 1 percentage point from 32% in 2021. Taking the long view, this represents an increase of 7 percentage points from 24% in 1998. When documentaries are removed from the analysis, women comprised 29% of producers.

Women accounted for 21% of all editors working on the top 250 films of 2021, down 1 percentage point from 22% in 2021. Taking the long view, this

represents an increase of just 1 percentage point from 20% in 1998. When documentaries are removed from the analysis, women comprised 20% of editors.

Figure 4.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Employed Behind the Scenes on Top 250 Films by Role



Women made up 7% of all cinematographers working on the top 250 films of 2022, an increase of 1 percentage point from 6% in 2021. Taking the long view, this represents an increase of 3 percentage points from 4% in 1998. When documentaries are removed from the analysis, the percentage of women cinematographers remains unchanged.

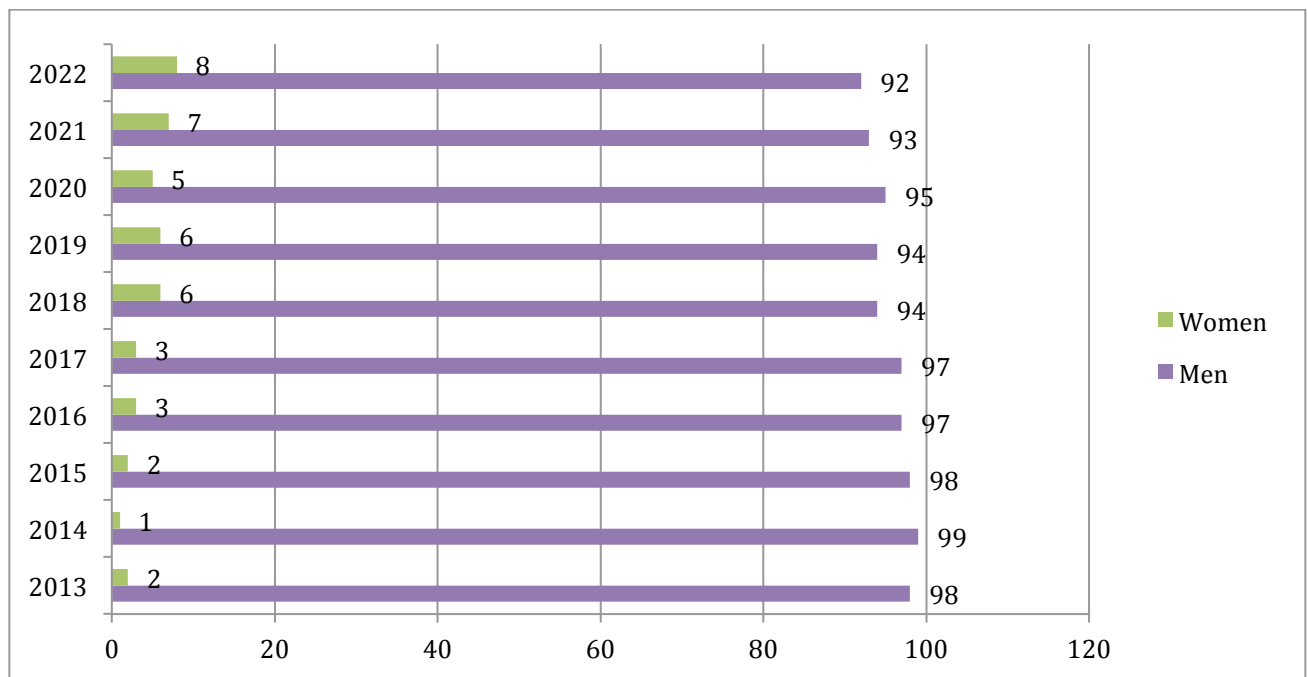
93% of the top 250 films had no women cinematographers, 80% had no women directors, 75% had no women editors, and 70% had no women writers.

Additional Role / Composers

Women comprised 8% of composers working on the top 250 grossing films of 2022 (see Figure 5). This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 7% in 2021. 91% of films had no women composers in 2022. When documentaries are removed from the analysis, the percentage of women composers remains unchanged.

Figure 5.

Recent Historical Representation of Women and Men as Composers on the Top 250 Films



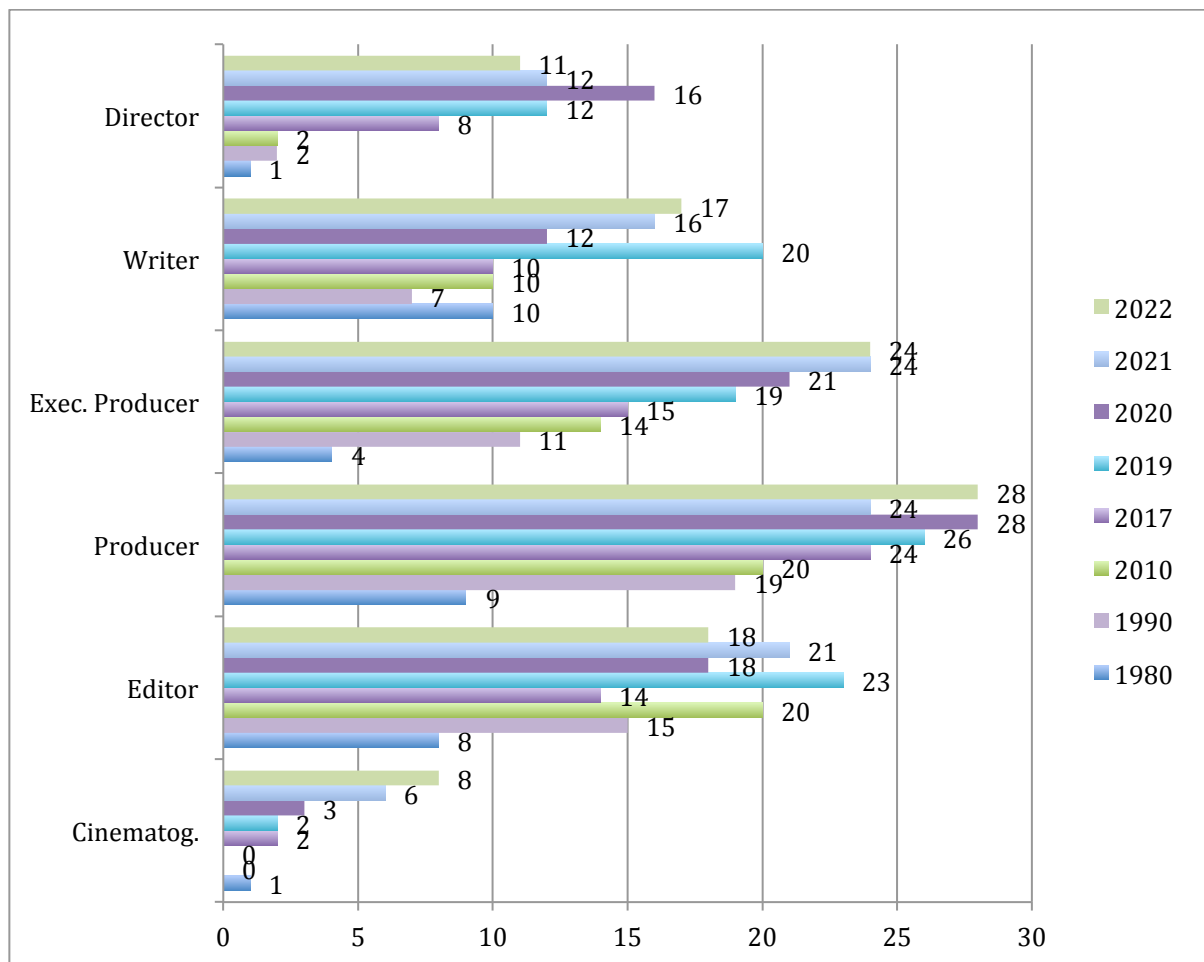
Findings/ Top 100 Films

Women comprised 22% of all directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 21% in 2021.

Women fared best as producers (28%), followed by executive producers (24%), editors (18%), writers (17%), directors (11%), and cinematographers (8%).

Figure 6.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Employed Behind the Scenes on Top 100 Films by Role*



*Note that relatively minor fluctuations in the numbers affect this data set to a greater extent than the set of 250 films due to its smaller size.

Women comprised 11% of directors working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents a decline of 1 percentage point from 12% in 2021 (see Figure 6).

Women accounted for 17% of writers working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 16% in 2021.

Women made up 24% of executive producers working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents no change from the level achieved in 2021.

Women comprised 28% of producers working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points from 24% in 2021, and is even with the percentage achieved in 2020.

Women accounted for 18% of editors working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents a decline of 3 percentage points from 21% in 2021.

Women made up 8% of cinematographers working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 6% in 2021. It also represents a recent historic high.

Additional Role / Composers

Women comprised 9% of composers working on the top 100 films of 2022. This represents an increase of 6 percentage points from 3% in 2021. 90% of films had no women composers in 2021.