

# **VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT OF FILM SCHOOLS**

**ANNEX 1** TO THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND  
GENDER EQUALITY PLAN OF THE  
FILMAKADEMIE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG GMBH  
2022-2027

## **TOGETHER FOR GENDER JUSTICE**

An initiative of the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (dfffb), the Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg, the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF, the University of Television and Film Munich (HFF), the ifs internationale filmschule koeln and the Academy of Media Arts Cologne (KHM)

"It is clear that too few women are directing. And it's a matter of finding out how it is the best to change that. For me it was always important to know strong films by women like Andrea Arnold. Those are role models to know: You can do this." (Maren Ade, director of "Toni Erdmann" among others, in an interview with the Stuttgarter Nachrichten)

Women in film and television are clearly underrepresented - in front of the camera and behind it: in almost all trades and especially in traditionally male-dominated areas of film production, such as the production, camera, sound or VFX departments.

- If film schools allocate almost equal numbers of places to male and female students, why does this ratio shift so drastically in later professional life?
- How can stakeholders be sensitised to the criterion of gender, both on a structural and content-related level?
- To what extent can film schools act as role models here and thus give impulses to the industry?
- How can the criterion of gender lead to a more comprehensive understanding of equal opportunities in the sense of diversity to enable participation and individual self-realisation for all university members?

Reason enough for the major film schools to take a joint stand with the aim of creating awareness for gender representation in film, to make women strong for the film business and to signal in the university structures: Here we think and work in a gender-just way!

### **KNOWLEDGE: Gender in teaching and research**

"Gender' is produced by using cultural symbols on people and objects. Words are such cultural symbols, but so can colours, shapes, sounds. Some of these are less explicit than words, but perhaps more powerful in their sensual impact. In their totality, such symbols create historically changing imaginaries of femininity and masculinity." (Andreas Dorschel, <http://genderforschung.kug.ac.at/zentrum-fuer-genderforschung>)

Since we have all grown up in this society and are prepared to accept many things as "given by nature", there is a need for special attention to the criterion of gender in all areas of film production. This concerns the organisational level (e.g. childcare on set, family-friendly working hours, fair distribution of funds) as well as the artistic implementation of content in all departments (e.g. casting, attribution of competence to actors, reproduction of

(discriminatory) stereotypes in characters and narratives, portrayal of violence). Teaching is already taking place at our universities to raise students' awareness of gender issues in their respective trades and beyond. The continuation and expansion of the offers is aimed at and should be further promoted through the networking of the universities and the exchange of teaching content and teachers. Examples are:

## Teaching

- Film history/media studies: focus on women directors, gender, transsexuality, media staging of the body, gender theory
- Gender and Film, Gender and Genre, Sexualised (Violent) Representation, Gender as a Mode of Aesthetic Experience
- Design possibilities of filmic presentation: dramaturgy, casting, the body (costume, make-up), cad rage and resolution (camera), editing gender (montage)
- Masterclasses, film series by and with female filmmakers

## Research

- Promotion of both theoretical-artistic and scientific theses of students with gender-relevant topics
- Promoting research by teachers on gender- and diversity-relevant topics and their intersections (gender - queer theory, migration, ethnicity)

## Inter-university events

- Research Conference: Babelsberg Salon: 1st Symposium on Gender/Research/Film, May 2018
- European Film Schools Double Conference on Gender, Diversity and Filmmaking in Amsterdam, November 2018, and Cologne, March 2019

## POWER: Gender parity in higher education structures

"At the beginning of bourgeois society, the philosophers Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte said: The citizen is always and in principle a man. For both reason and the state are by definition male beings. Woman is only matter. Women are not subjects, they are dependent, immature and have an innate love instinct that makes them unsafe candidates for public office. (...) This, then, is the deep foundation of the bourgeois society in which we still live today." (from the keynote speech by Jutta Brückner, Pro Quote Regie, Berlinale 2016)

Why is the number of female professors still not nearly as high (according to the NRW Gender Report 2016, approx. 22% female professors at German universities) as that of their male colleagues, and this despite the fact that there is almost parity in the status group of female academic staff? Also, positions with managerial functions are still more often held by men. Not least because of their role model function, gender parity is sought in the various status groups and commissions. Likewise, the goal is to increase the proportion of female applicants, especially in the traditionally predominantly male courses of study.

## EMPOWERMENT: students and teachers

The film schools see it as their responsibility to specifically promote the respective underrepresented gender (currently these are mostly women) - this also involves the use of financial resources. On the one hand, this should prepare the students during their studies to be able to better position themselves in the industry, and on the other hand, support the teachers in their professional (academic) careers.

Example formats are:

- Into The Wild - cross-university mentoring programme for female students and graduates
- Coaching formats Negotiation techniques, rhetoric, self-presentation, leadership skills (with ECTS in key competences)
- Support formats for reconciling studies, career, and family: Maternity leave, parental leave and flexible re-entry are not always and everywhere a matter of course.

## **SELF COMMITMENTS: More needs to happen**

As long as there are visible and verifiable gender inequalities in the film industry, we as film schools in Germany are obliged to promote young female filmmakers in such a way that they can gain a foothold in the industry with equal representation and be successfully represented in the future. In doing so, we understand gender justice as a topic that encompasses both the productive coexistence of the genders as well as the reflection of their respective role models and their attribution of competence.

German film schools see themselves as role models in terms of gender parity and the teaching of gender competence. It is important to us to pass on these impulses to the audio-visual media industry and to society, and at the same time to continue networking with industry initiatives (including WIFT, Pro Quote). With the following voluntary commitments and projects - to be aligned with the respective university background - the above-mentioned universities underline this goal and at the same time strive to strengthen cooperation and exchange among the universities.

1. Development of plans for the advancement of women or equality concepts for the implementation of equal opportunities.
2. Implementation of gender-conscious appointment procedures (including issuing guidelines for implementation, compulsory participation of gender equality officers, proof of gender competence as a compulsory criterion).
3. Increase the proportion of women in new professorships to be filled, considering suitability, with the aim of achieving parity in the proportion of female professors.
4. Aim for equal representation on admissions committees and appeals committees.
5. Appropriate increase in the capacities of equal opportunities officers (financial, personnel), establishment of an equal opportunities officer also at schools with private legal forms.
6. Inclusion and deepening of courses on gender competence in the curricula and raising awareness of the relevance of the topic in all departments.
7. Further training in gender competence for teachers.
8. Offer coaching and mentoring programmes for female teachers and students.
9. Promoting research by teachers on gender- and diversity-relevant topics.
10. Increase the number of female applicants also in the traditionally male-dominated degree programmes with the aim of equal admission of students after the artistic aptitude test.
11. Establish childcare facilities at all universities.
12. Commitment to a zero-tolerance maxim in dealing with sexualised violence and any form of discrimination
13. Draw up an action plan at each university with concrete objectives: target figures and time frame, financial and personnel resources.
14. Networking and exchange between the persons entrusted with implementation by the respective universities.
15. Evaluation in 2020: Documentation of the implementation of the self-commitment measures and presentation to an appropriate public.

Berlin, Cologne, Ludwigsburg, Munich, Potsdam in February 2018