

GENDER BALANCE IN ITALIAN FILM CREWS

DATA AND RESEARCH POLICIES | # 4

SEMINAR ON GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN THE FILM INDUSTRY

Tuesday, 3 September 2024

Biennale; Eurimages; Women in Film, Television & Media Italia

KEY FACTS

- The study investigated the presence of women in **11 departments**, including, for the first time, the role of sound designer. As in previous years, the **report focuses only on top-level positions**, such as directors, supervisors and heads of department.
- This fourth edition of the report **reveals an improving scenario, although there is still a major gap to be bridged**. That is, by 2023, women represented only 22% of directors, just under 30% of scriptwriters and editors, 12% of directors of photography, and not even 10% of directors of music. The female contingent in production and in special effects supervision remains stable at under 30%, while costume and make-up are still female-dominated professions with a no less significant gap to be bridged for men.
- **The percentage of female professionals in senior roles** across various departments **is rising around the period 2017-2023**, with the **most significant average annual growth** seen for **SFX supervisors** (+142%) and **sound designers** (+108%).
- Moreover, there tend to be **more women in the various departments when a production is female-driven**.
- **With the increase in female directors, the number of female- and predominantly female-directed Italian productions also rose** – to 19% in 2023, up three percentage points in a year, and nine points from 2017, on a steadily incrementing trend.
- There are also **more female-directed works with budgets exceeding €3,5 million**, up 41% year-on-year between 2017 and 2023, compared to an average annual growth of 18% for male-directed works.

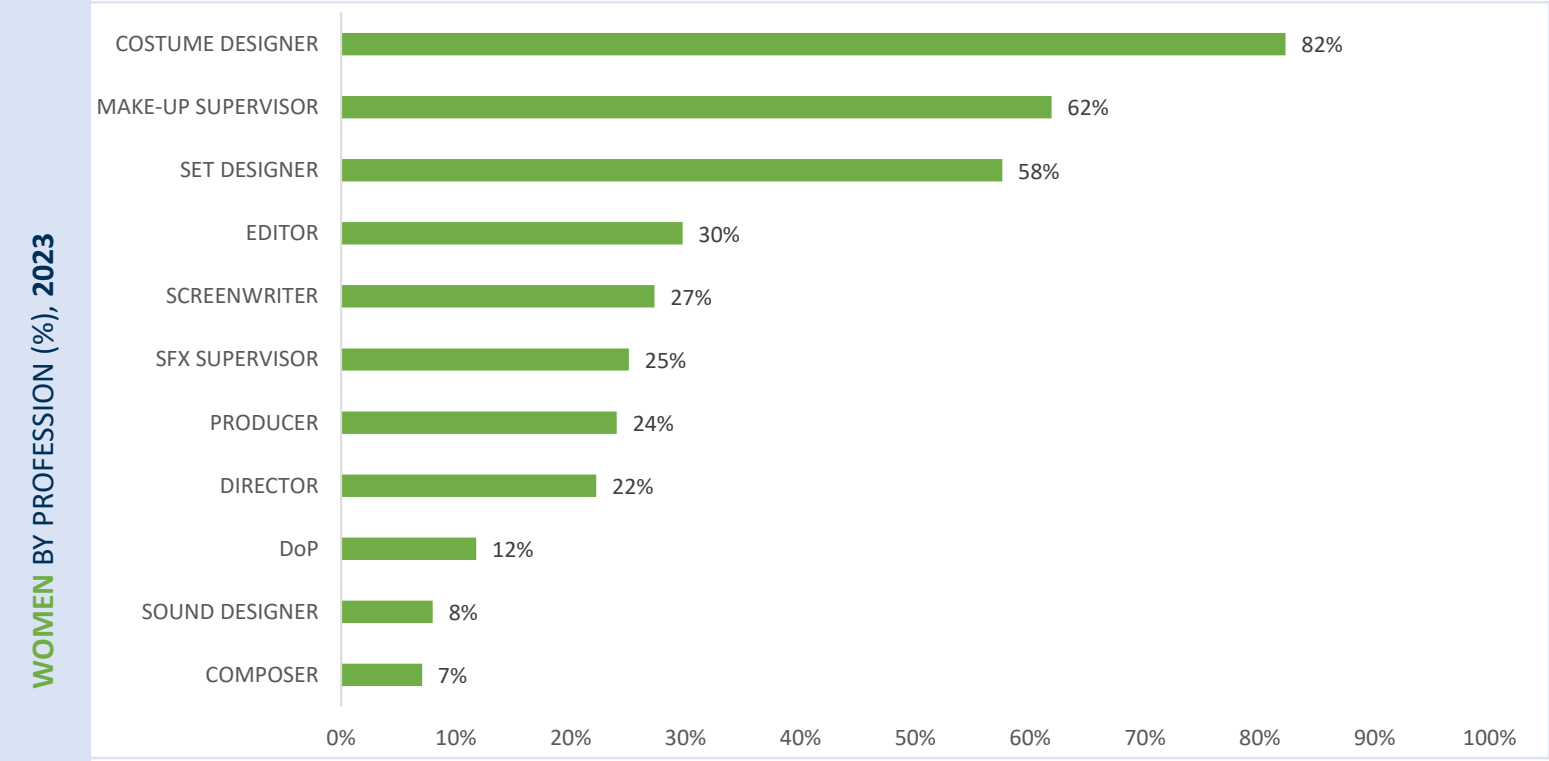
KEY FACTS/2

- While **documentaries remain the primary genre for female-driven projects**, there was also **significant growth in female-directed fiction** between 2022 and 2023, especially **dramas/romances (+32%)**. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues.
- From 2017 to 2023, **female-directed works averaged more festival and prize nominations** (33% compared to 25% for male-directed works) **and garnered more awards overall** (1.2 awards per film versus 0.7 for films directed by men).
- However, **male-directed works tend to be more awarded at major festivals**.
- The **director's gender has no significant impact on theatre circulation**, but **it affects the revenues**, also **combined with the production costs**.
- Despite the encouraging statistics, **the growth in female professionals remains sluggish**. At the current rate, **the goal of achieving a 50:50 ratio in the directing profession would be reached by 2055; among writers, only in 2064**. A timeline to **parity in the director of photography role cannot yet be projected**, because the percentage of women is too low and their rate of increase is too slow.

METODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

- First published in 2020, the **Gender Balance in Italian Film Crews Report** by **Università Cattolica** and the **Direzione Generale Cinema e Audiovisivo** at the Ministero della Cultura aims at measuring the **gender balance in Italian film and audiovisual production projects**.
- The report is based on **data gathered using [CENTRIC](#)**, software developed by Università Cattolica that provides a unified framework for the systematic collection, storage, analysis and presentation of data about the audiovisual industries.
- **CENTRIC extracts and cross-references data about Italian movies** from multiple open-access online movie databases, as well as official sources. Each crew entry includes the movie title, the movie's unique ID, the professional's unique ID, their name, and the gender attributed to them by the system. (This includes "company" for collectives and "unknown" when gender could not be conclusively identified.)
- The **professional's gender profile is inferred through probabilistic estimates**. These estimates take account of given names and, where available, short bios. The resulting "attributed gender", therefore, should be considered not as the gender of the individual but rather as the gender associated with the name (and any pronouns in the available bios) that that individual used in film credits.
- This approach **makes only a partial estimate for non-binary genders**, which therefore feature in the dataset to a statistically insignificant extent. CENTRIC was, however, conceived as a participatory dataset that will allow census professionals to edit the automatic gender attribution in the future and thus enhance non-binary gender attributions in a more meaningful way.
- From this report, the **survey has taken the year of reference as the production year**, not the clearance-for-distribution year used in previous reports (to facilitate comparison with other datasets, e.g. for box office revenues). This new criterion has also been applied to the works from before 2023, so **some values may differ from those in previous reports**.

SAMPLE			
2,047 ITALIAN FEATURE FILMS Productions or co-productions cleared or classified for distribution	11 PROFESSIONAL ROLES* Directors, screenwriters, editors, composers, directors of photography (DoP), producers, costume designers, set designers, make-up artists, special-effects supervisors and sound designers	7 YEARS** 2017–2023	30,470 PROs Professionals surveyed



In 2023, 8 of the 11 professions analysed were still male-dominated. In music and sound direction, women made up less than 10%.

22% of directors were women; among producers, special-effects supervisors, screenwriters and editors, the female contingent ranged from 24 to 30%.

Costume and make-up were largely female-dominated, whereas set design tended to be more gender-balanced.

* In 2024, the survey updated job classifications by introducing 4 distinct levels for each profession, with the aim of providing a finer analysis of women’s involvement in the Italian screen industry. As in previous years, the report only includes data on top-level (tier-1) positions, like head, director or supervisor.

** For the first time, the survey has now taken the year of reference as the production year, not the clearance-for-distribution year used in previous reports. This change seeks to facilitate comparison with other national and international surveys and datasets (e.g. for box office revenues). This new criterion has also been applied to the works from before 2023. Some values may therefore differ from those in previous reports.

Even though the gender gap remains wide, the **annual average growth (AAGR)* of female employment** in films shows that it is **closing**.

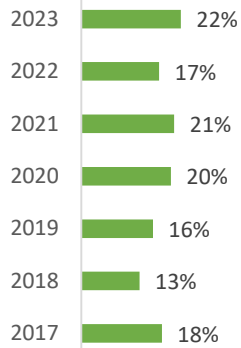
The **AAGR is predominantly positive in the traditionally male-dominated departments** (especially SFX and sound), indicating a significant rise in the number of women.

* The AAGR measures the average annual growth in the number of women per department.

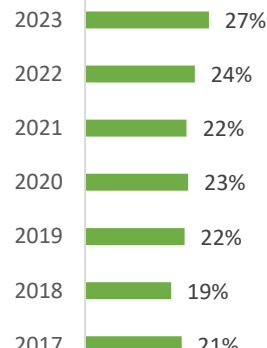
DIRECTOR

SCREENWRITER

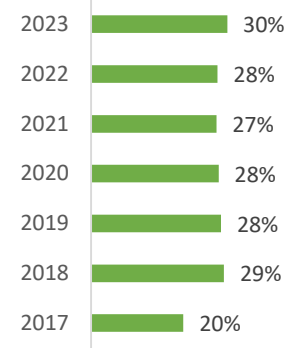
EDITOR



AAGR: **+17%**



AAGR: **+5%**

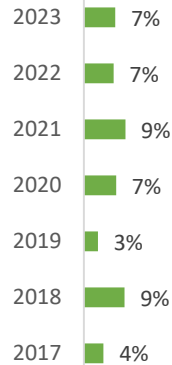


AAGR: **+6%**

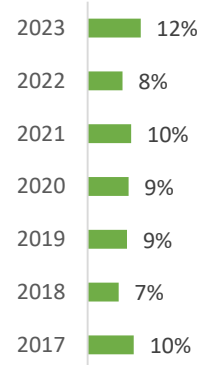
COMPOSER

DoP

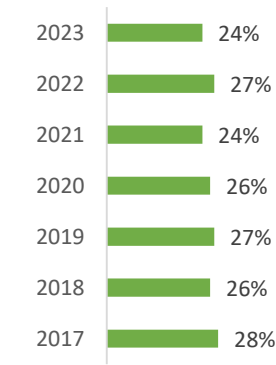
PRODUCER



AAGR: **+17%**



AAGR: **+5%**



AAGR: **+2%**

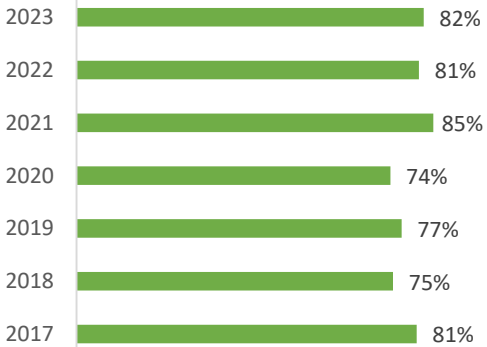
COSTUME DESIGNER

SET DESIGNER

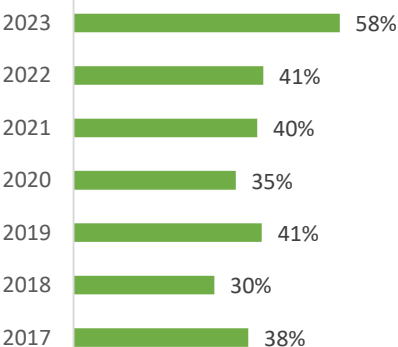
MAKE-UP

SFX SUPERVISOR

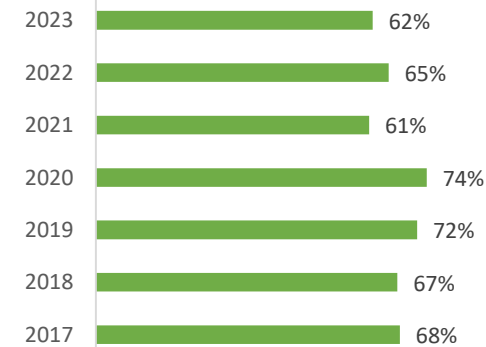
SOUND DESIGNER



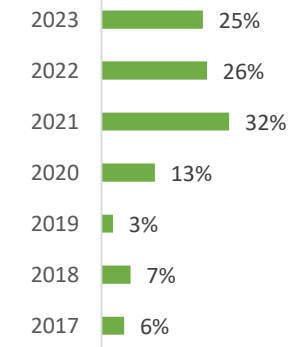
AAGR: **+3%**



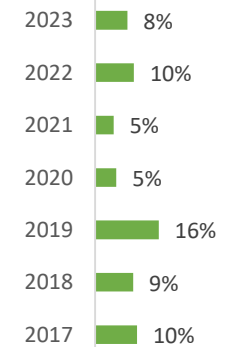
AAGR: **-4%**



AAGR: **- 6%**



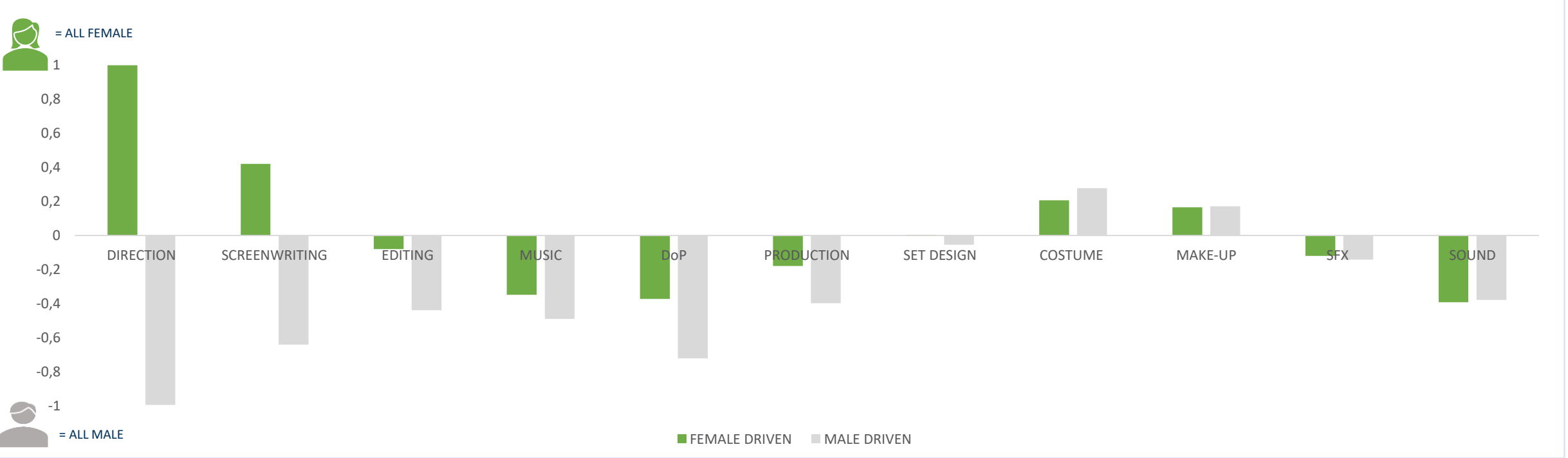
AAGR: **+142%**



AAGR: **+108%**

The gender-balance data across the 11 departments considering the entire period from 2017 to 2023 indicate that **female-driven projects** (represented by the green bars) **generally create more opportunities for women than do male-driven projects** (represented by grey bars), especially in the traditionally male-dominated professions. In other words, when the director is a woman, the scores tend to be more positive, reflecting larger numbers of female professionals; in contrast, on projects led by men, male professionals tend to predominate.

GENDER BALANCE SCORE (GBS*) BY PROFESSION FOR FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN PROJECTS, 2017–2023



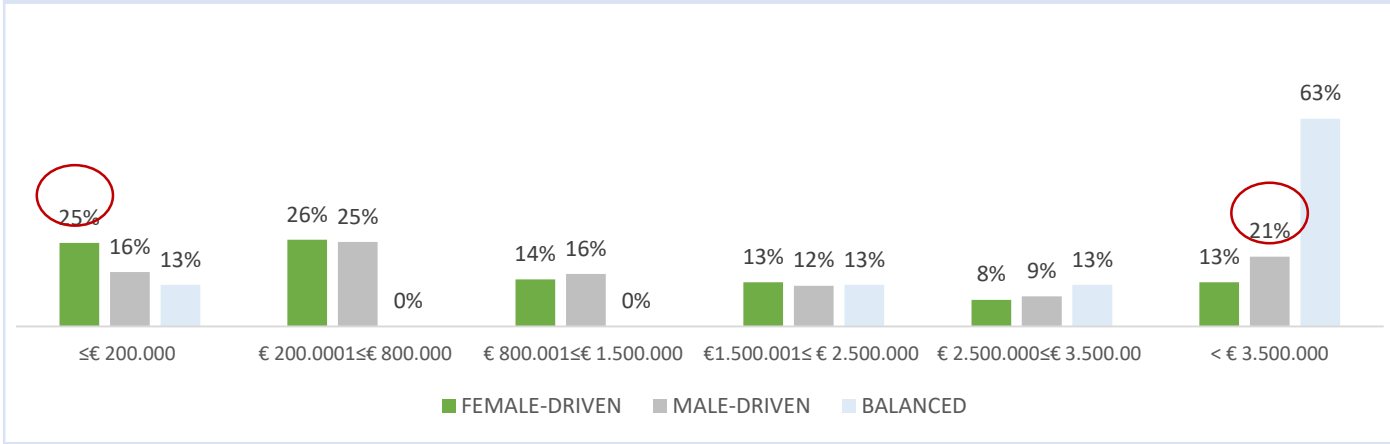
* The GBS measures the composition using the formula: (Women-Men)/(Women+Men).

From 2017 to 2023, the proportion of female-driven works rose by 9 percentage points to 19% of the Italian feature films produced.

FEMALE-DRIVEN, MALE-DRIVEN AND GENDER-BALANCED WORKS (%) BY YEAR
2017–2023*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
FEMALE-DRIVEN	10%	9%	16%	17%	18%	16%	19%
MALE-DRIVEN	84%	84%	80%	77%	75%	78%	74%
BALANCED	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%

FEMALE-DRIVEN, MALE-DRIVEN AND GENDER-BALANCED WORKS (%) BY COST
2017–2023**



25% of the female-driven projects from 2017 to 2023 were produced with less than €200,000.

Only 13% of the female-led works cost more than €3,5 million, compared to 21% of the male-led ones.

However, the average annual growth (AARG) of female-driven movies costing over €1,5 million was +41%, compared to +18% for male-driven ones, indicating a promising trend.

AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATES FOR FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN WORKS BY COST, 2017–2023

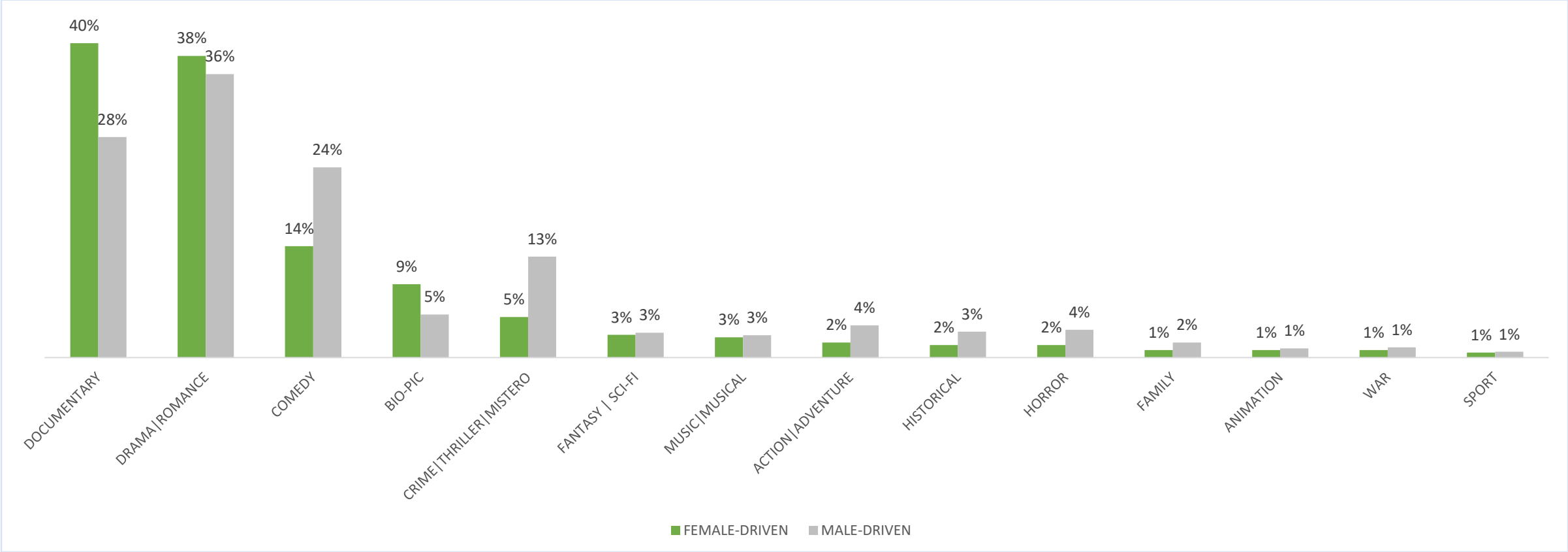
	≤ € 1.500.000	> € 1.500.000
FEMALE-DRIVEN	↑ +66%	↑ +41%
MALE-DRIVEN	↑ +26%	↑ +18%

* There may be small changes in some data values now that a new criterion is being used for associating each work with a year, as mentioned in the first slide.
** Production costs are available for 63% of the works.

The **largest category of female-led works between 2017 and 2023 was documentaries**; the AAGR was +26%.

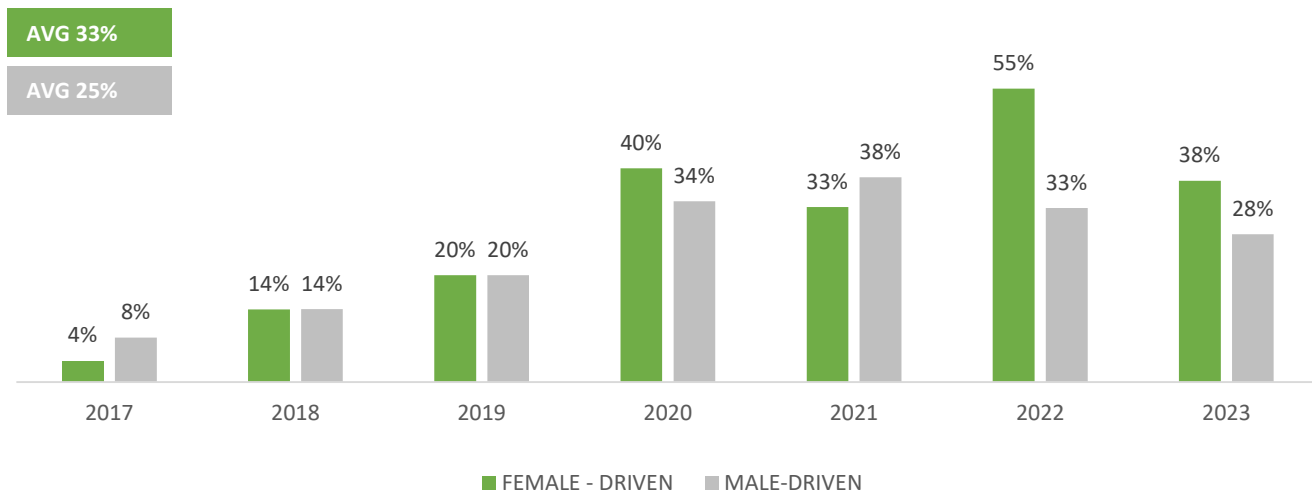
But **between 2022 and 2023, there was a rise in the number of female-driven fiction works, especially dramas/romances** (+32%)

FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN WORKS **BY GENRE** (%)
2017–2023*

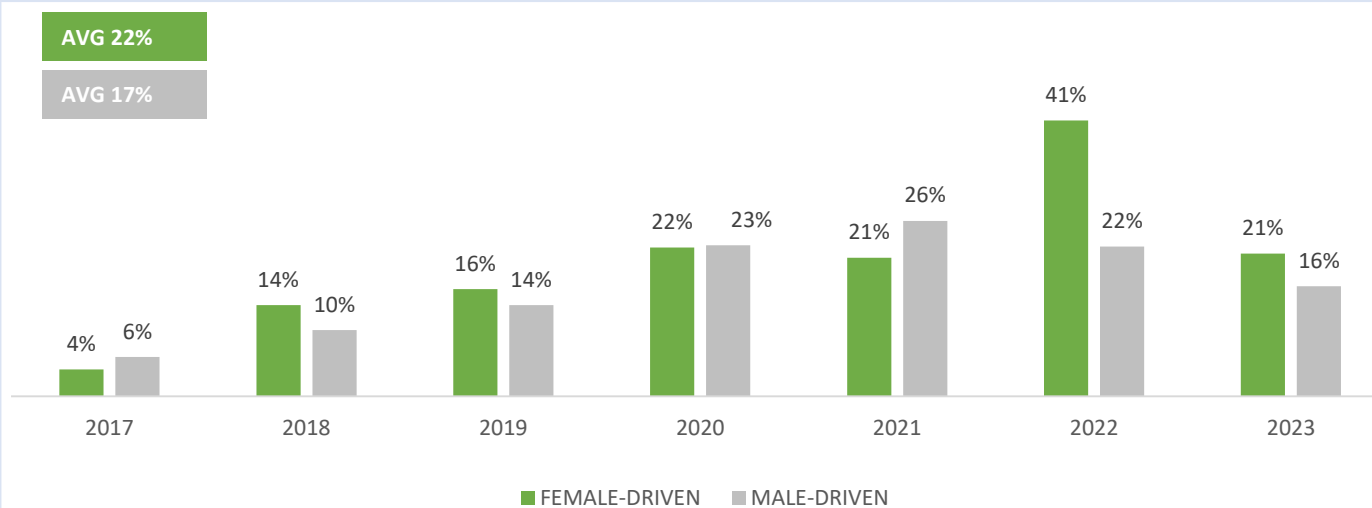


* Each work may be ascribed to more than one genre; the sum of the percentages may therefore exceed 100%

FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN AWARD-NOMINATED WORKS (%) BY YEAR



FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN AWARD-WINNING WORKS (%) BY YEAR



AVERAGE NOMINATIONS AND AWARDS RECEIVED BY FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN WORKS, 2017–2023

	NOMINEES	AWARDS
FEMALE-DRIVEN	1.3	1.2
MALE-DRIVEN	1	0.7

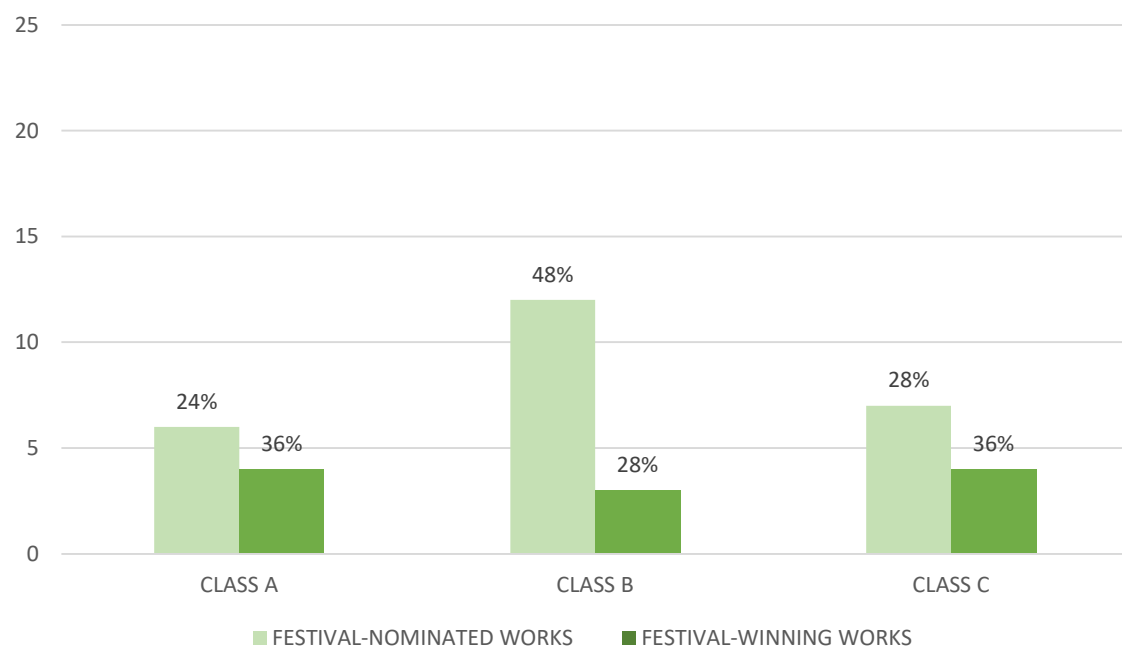
Between 2017 and 2023, **33% of female-led films were nominated for prizes or festival awards**, compared to **25% of male-led works**. **22% of female-driven works won awards**, compared to 17% of works led by men.

On average, female-driven works received 1.3 nominations and 1.2 awards, while male-driven works received 1 nomination and 0.7 awards.

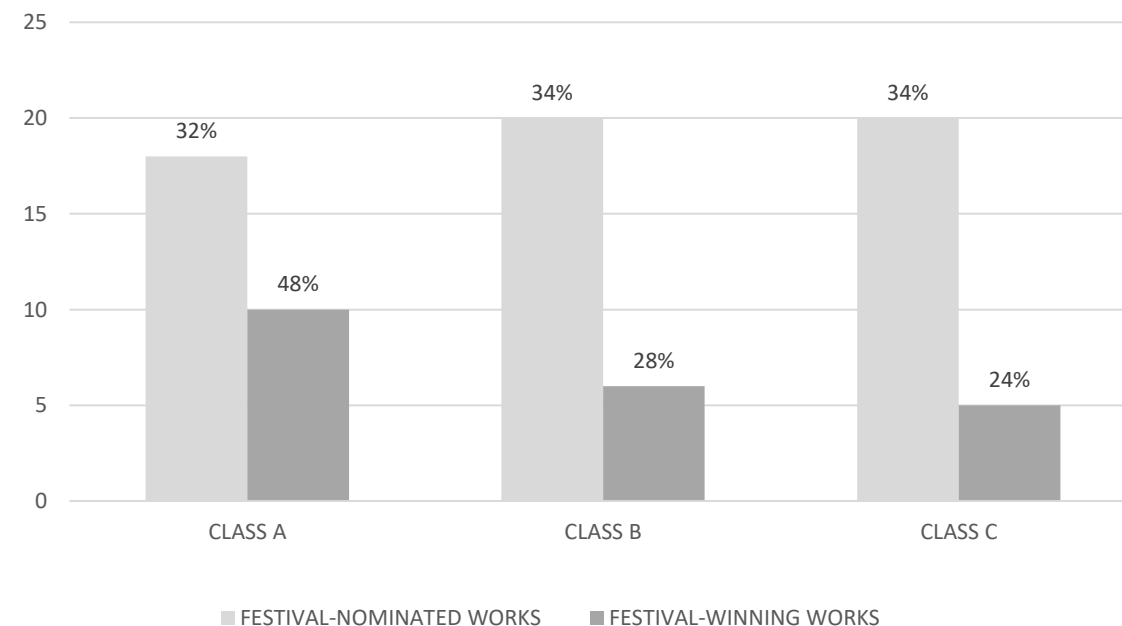
In general, **the share of works nominated for and winning awards has grown significantly**, from 5% in 2017 to 18% in 2023.

However, **when looking at the different festival classes** (as per the classification adopted by the Ministry of Culture), it emerges that **female-directed works tend to be nominated mainly in Class B festivals**. In contrast, **male-directed works are nominated similarly in all festival classes**. In addition, **male-directed films receive awards mainly in Class A festivals**, whereas **female-directed films receive awards in Class A and Class C festivals**.

FEMALE-DRIVEN FESTIVAL-NOMINATED AND WINNING WORKS (N|%)
2023



MALE-DRIVEN FESTIVAL-NOMINEE AND WINNING WORKS (No|%)
2023



SAMPLE

3 YEARS

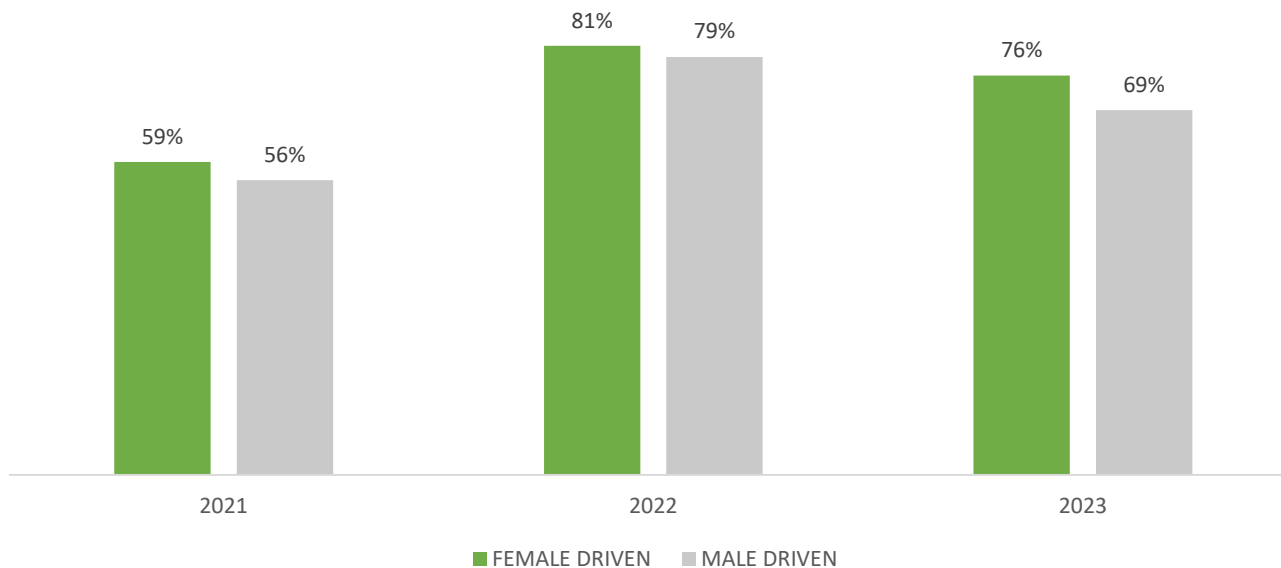
2021–2023

1,041 ITALIAN FEATURE FILMS

Productions or co-productions cleared or classified for distribution



FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN WORKS RELEASED (%), 2021–2023



Between 2021 and 2023, **69% of the films produced had at least one theatrical release.**

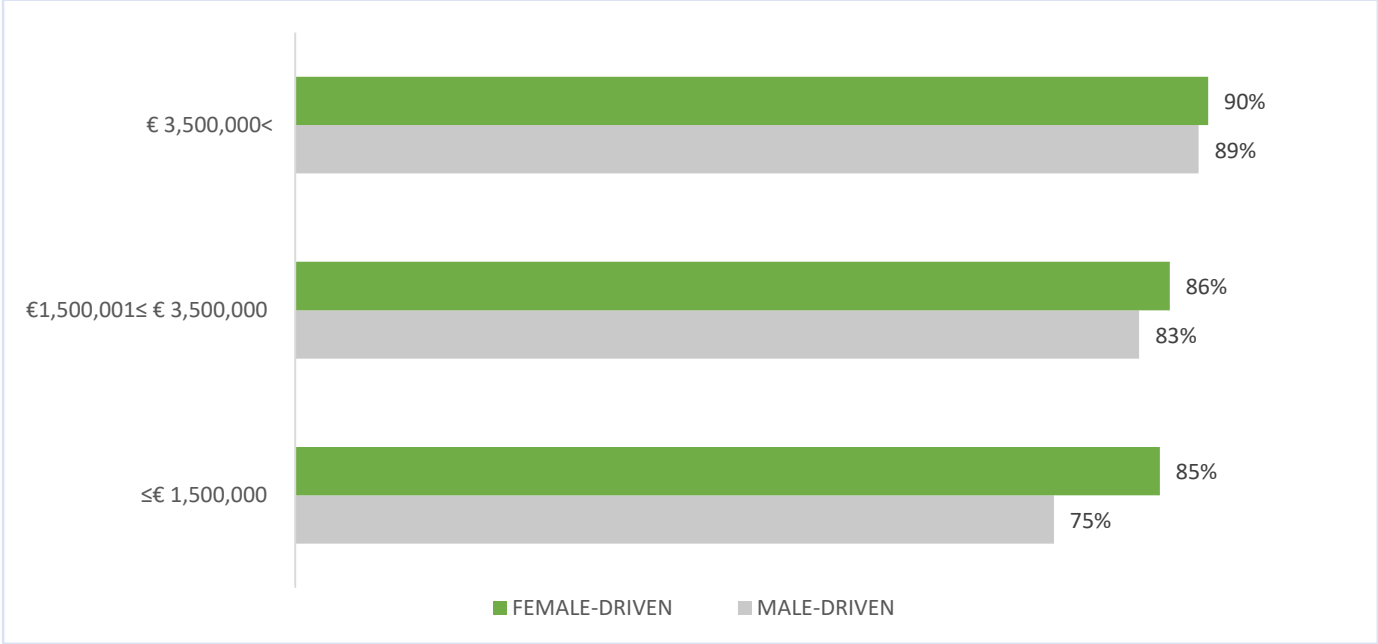
After 2021, when theatrical distribution in Italy was still heavily impacted by the health emergency and theatre closures, **the percentage of works released annually** returned to a **stable level** for both female- and male-directed films.

The gender of the director does not significantly influence the share of released works: in fact, over the three-year period, 72% of female-directed films and 68% of male-directed films were released.

The **theatrical circulation** of films is **only partially correlated** with the **amount invested in production**; however, production costs are significantly correlated with box office results: **more expensive productions generate greater box office revenue**.

Female-directed films perform, on average, lower in movie theatres than male-directed films. Specifically, the **average box office revenue for female-driven works was 76% lower than for male-driven works in 2021–2022** but **176% higher in 2023**, mainly due to Paola Cortellesi’s film.

FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN **WORKS RELEASED BY COST (%)***, 2021–2023



FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN **WORKS REVENUES (AVG) PER PRODUCTION COST***, 2021–2023

	≤€ 1.500.000	€1.500.001≤ € 3.500.000	>€3.500.000
FEMALE-DRIVEN	€14,599	€93,056	€ 1,876,090**
MALE-DRIVEN	€20,173	€ 95,124	€ 812,042

FEMALE- AND MALE-DRIVEN **WORKS, REVENUES (AVG)**, 2021–2023

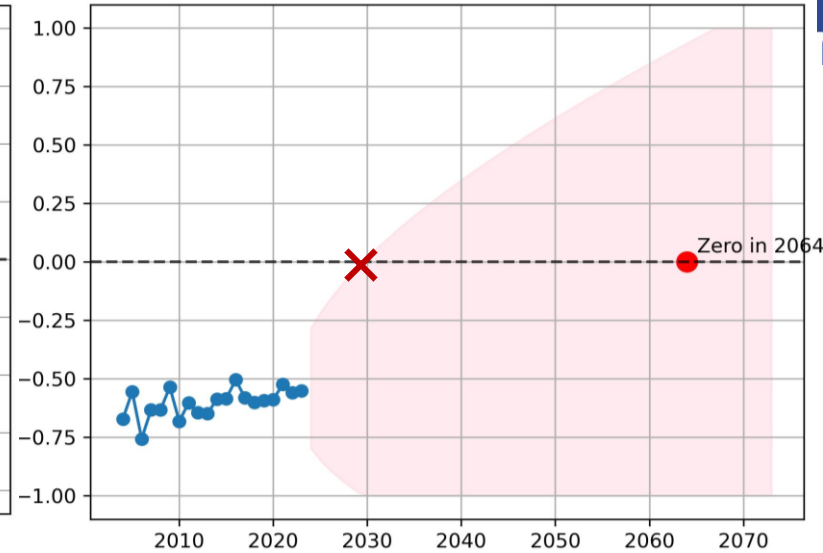
	2021	2022	2023	AVG
FEMALE-DRIVEN	€39,129	€35,353	€ 683,325***	€279,945****
MALE-DRIVEN	€122,346	€193,937	€247,257	€192,516

*Production costs are available for 73% of the works.
** The Cortellesi’s film accounts for 91% of the female-directed films’ revenues in this cost category.
*** Excluding Cortellesi's film, the average revenue of the female-driven films in 2023 drops to € 68,343; nonetheless, it remains the highest of the three years.
**** Excluding Cortellesi's film, the average revenue of the female-driven films, in the three years, is €48,601, 75% lower than the average of male-driven films in the same period.

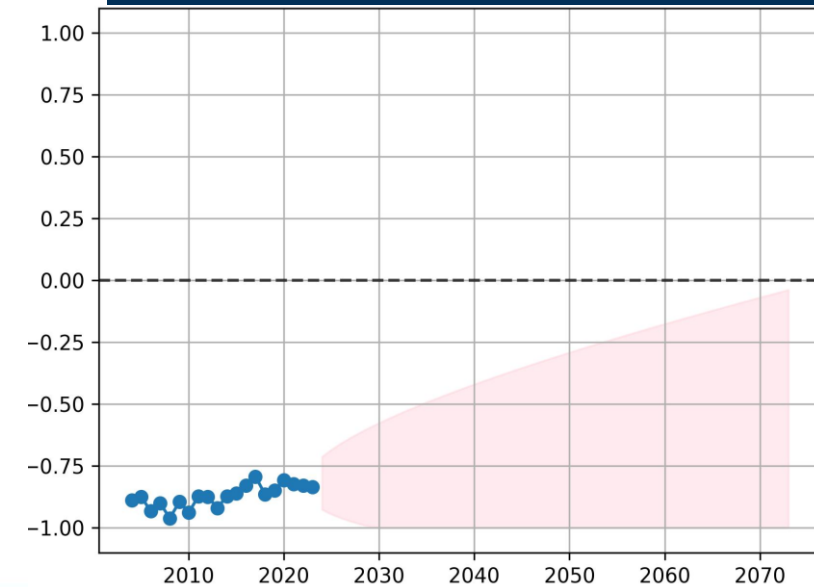
DIRECTOR



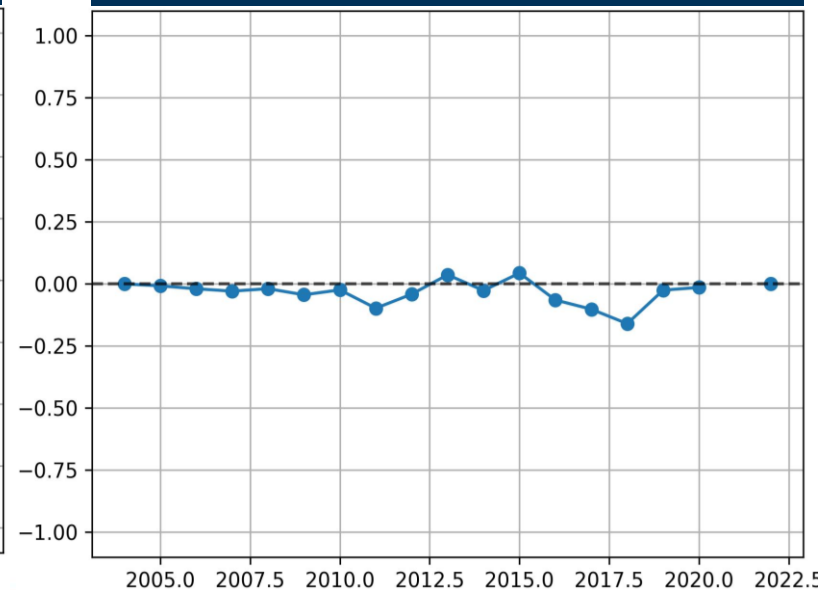
SCREENWRITER



DIRECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHY



SET DESIGNER



Projections for when gender equity may be achieved vary considerably between the professions*.

Based on current trends, **gender balance in directing could be reached as soon as 2044**, although the estimated year is 2054.

Similarly, **gender balance in screenwriting is estimated for 2064**, but recent trends suggest it could arrive as **early as 2030**.

For DoP, gender balance may **not be achieved even in fifty years**, whereas the picture is **already more balanced for set designers**.

* The estimates were derived using an exponential smoothing Holt-Winters-based approach with a 95% confidence interval on the number of women employed in Italian films from 2004 to 2023.



Direzione Generale
**CINEMA e
AUDIOVISIVO**



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