

Sundance Institute: Artist Demographics in Submissions & Acceptances

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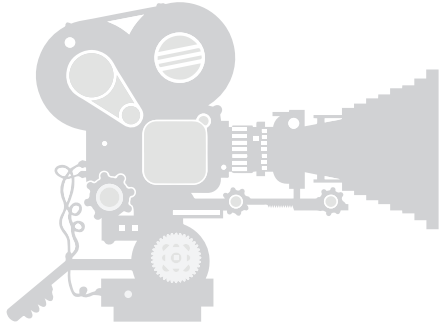
USC Annenberg
Inclusion Initiative

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE: ARTIST DEMOGRAPHICS IN SUBMISSIONS & ACCEPTANCES

USC ANNENBERG INCLUSION INITIATIVE

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR AT SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

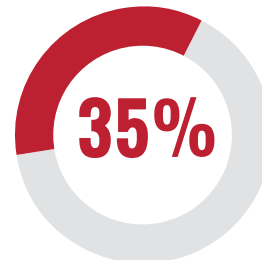
In 2017 and 2018...



**Projects include features and episodic content only*

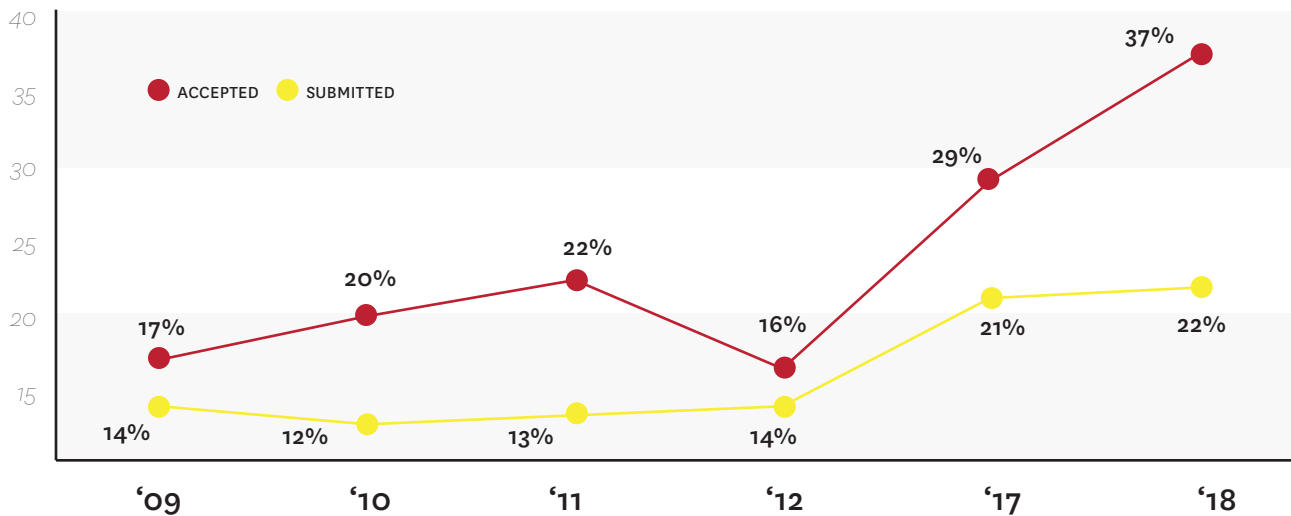


FEMALE-DIRECTED
PROJECTS SUBMITTED

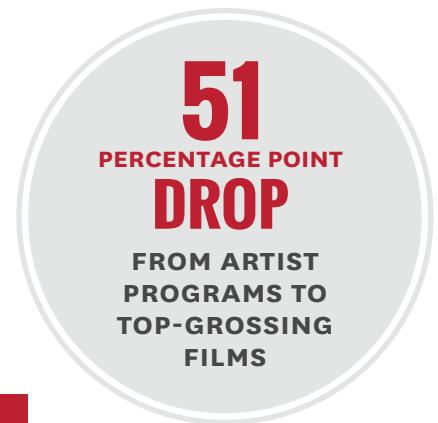
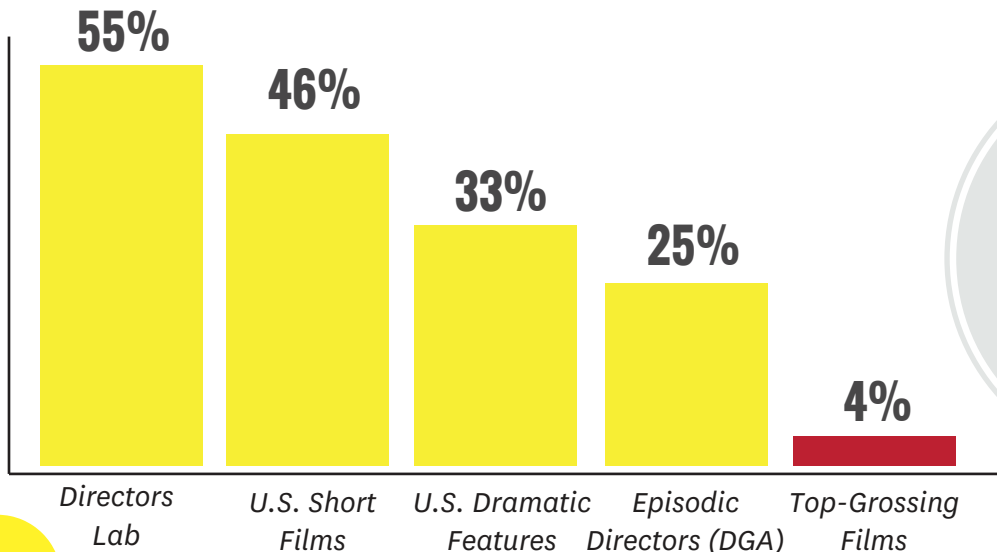


FEMALE-DIRECTED
PROJECTS ACCEPTED

WOMEN-DIRECTED U.S. DRAMATIC FEATURES SUBMITTED & ACCEPTED TO SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL



WHAT IS THE PIPELINE FOR WOMEN DIRECTORS FROM ARTIST PROGRAMS TO TOP-GROSSING FILMS?

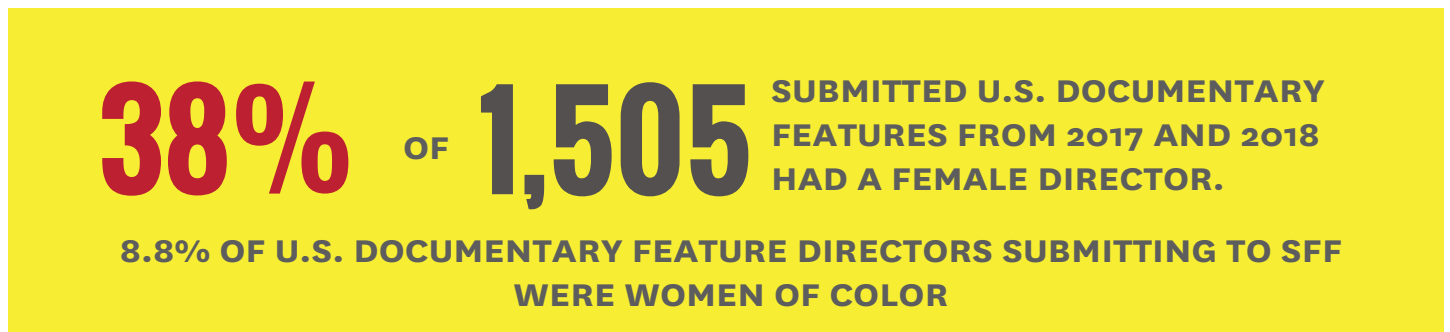


DIRECTOR RACE/ETHNICITY AT THE SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

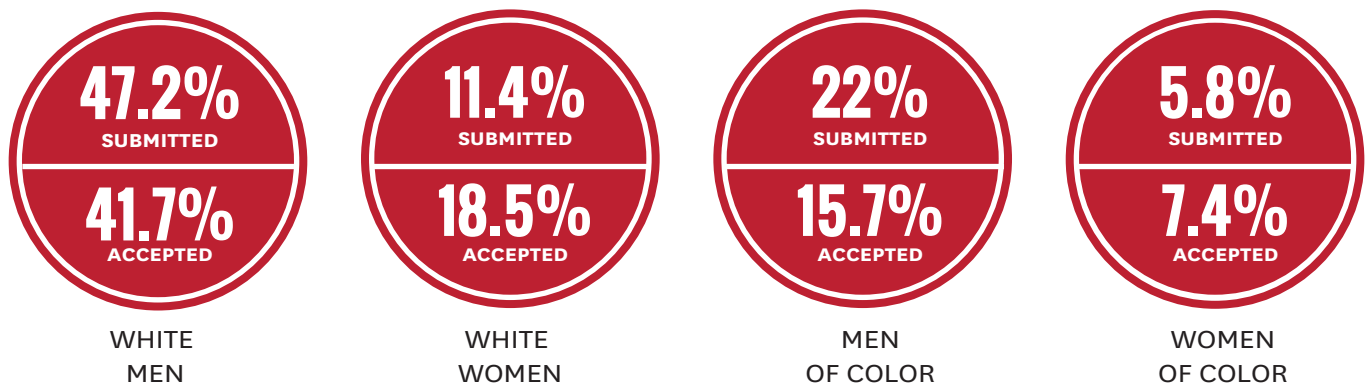
In 2017 and 2018, submissions to...

	U.S. CENSUS	U.S. DRAMATIC	U.S. DOCS	U.S. SHORTS	U.S. EPISODIC
WHITE	61%	59%	64%	54%	56%
BLACK	13%	8%	6%	8%	11%
LATINX	18%	7%	6%	8%	7%
ASIAN	6%	6%	4%	8%	5%
MIDDLE EASTERN	-	3%	2%	3%	2%
NATIVE/INDIGENOUS	1.3%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%
PACIFIC ISLANDER	0.2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
MULTIRACIAL	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%
OTHER/NO ANSWER	-	13%	14%	14%	12%

WOMEN OF COLOR DIRECT FEW FEATURE DOCS

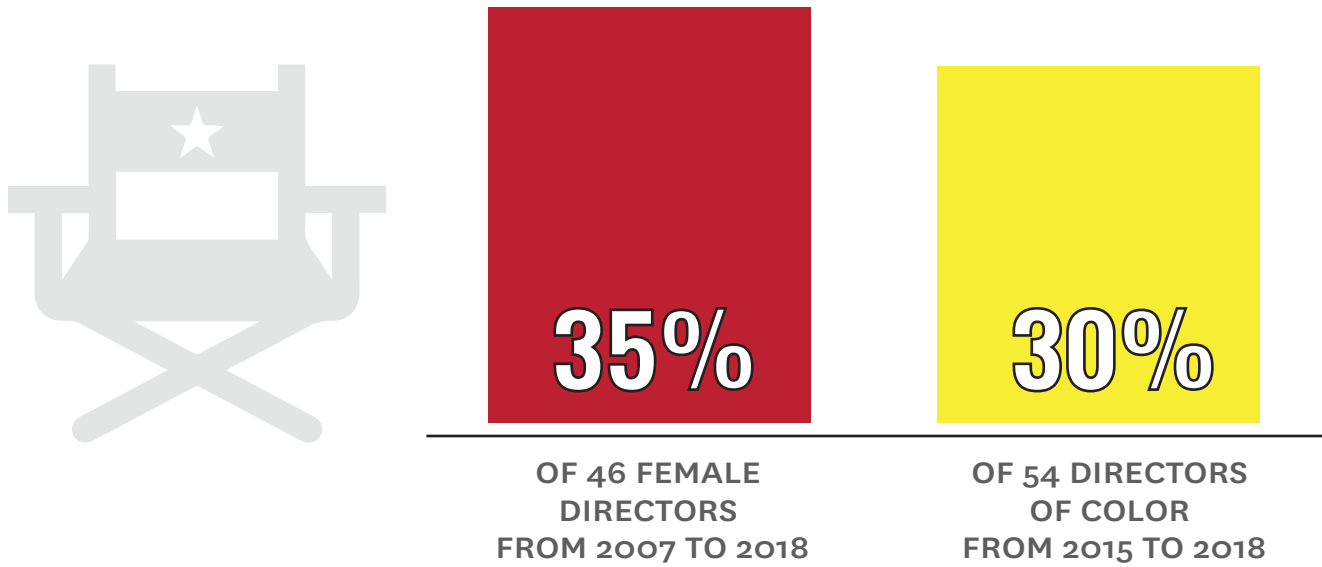


SUBMISSIONS AND ACCEPTANCES TO U.S. DRAMATIC SECTIONS FROM 2017-2018

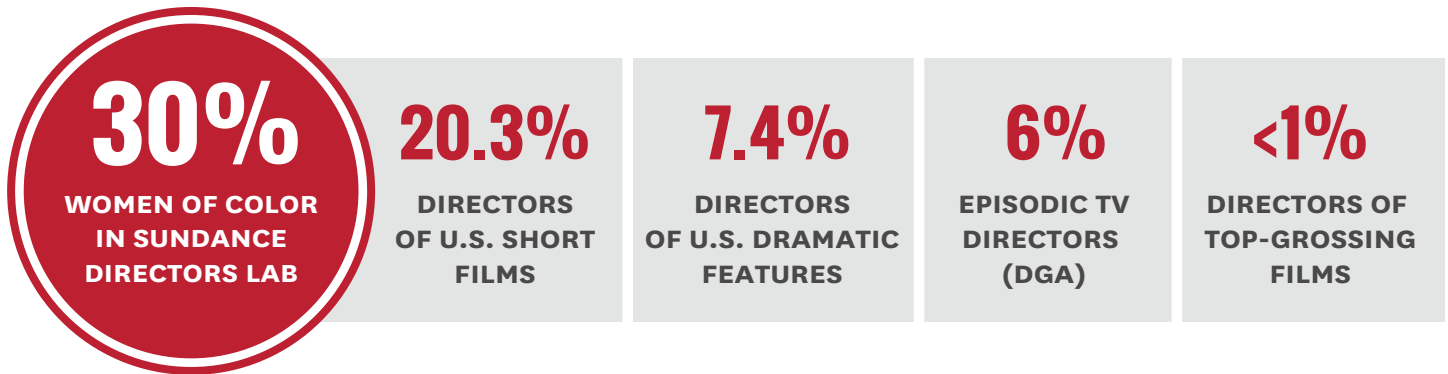


FROM SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL TO TOP-GROSSING FILMS

The Percentage of Top-Grossing Directors Who Have Received Prior Support from Sundance Institute

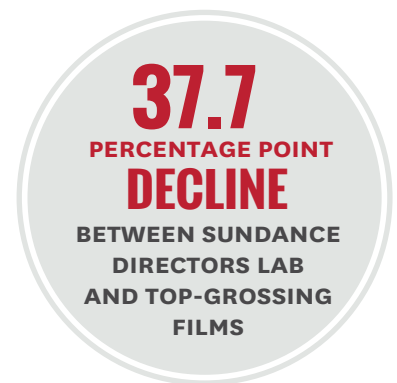
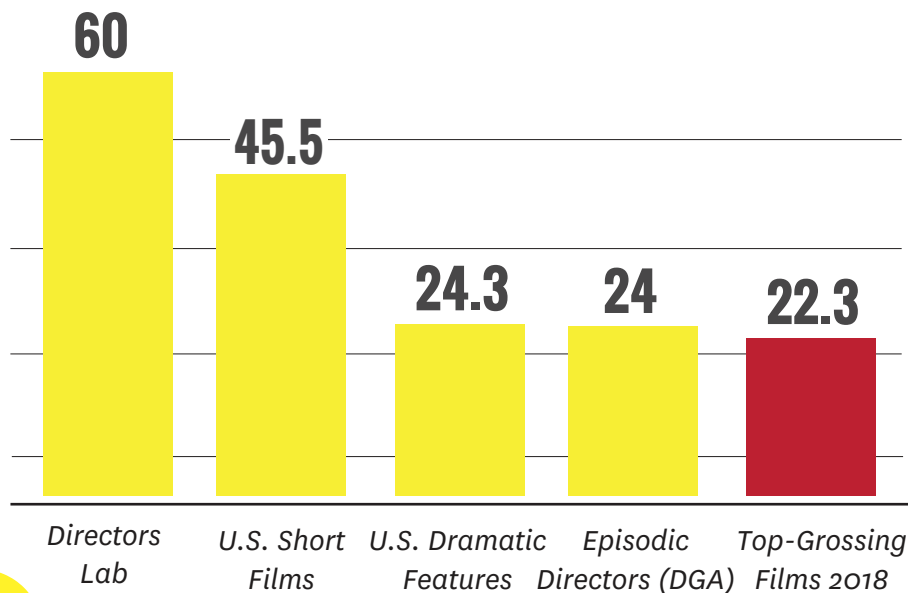


THE PIPELINE FOR FEMALE DIRECTORS OF COLOR



THE PIPELINE FOR DIRECTORS OF COLOR TO TOP-GROSSING FILMS

in percentages



Sundance Institute: Artist Demographics in Submissions & Acceptances

Executive Summary

Sundance Institute and the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (AI²) partnered to analyze existing demographic data from submissions and acceptances to the annual Sundance Film Festival and the Sundance Institute's Artist Support programs to reveal key insights on the talent pipeline for independent film. This study covers the Festival from 2017-2018, and the Artist Programs from 2016-2017. Sundance Institute has [reported data from 2019](#), but that recent data has not been analyzed by the USC Annenberg team in this report.

Sundance Institute is making the applicant-reported data and demographic information on all submissions public in an attempt to increase transparency and reveal trends that are relevant not only to Sundance but to the industry as a whole. Participants reported gender identity in the categories of male, female, gender-non conforming and transgender, although we recognize that gender identity can be expressed in categories outside these. The analysis reveals that, **overall across the entire Festival**, 28% of feature-length and episodic projects *submitted* to the Sundance Film Festival across two years had at least one woman director, as did 34.1% of shorts. Of feature films and episodic content *accepted* in 2017 and 2018, 35% had a woman director, while 51.4% of short films did.

In terms of directors of color, 35.2% of feature length and episodic projects and 37% of shorts *submitted* had at least one director of color. A total of 27.7% of feature films and episodic content and 45% of shorts *accepted* at the Festival across two years had at least one director of color.

The study reveals a highly diverse talent pool eager to enter the field with robust submissions and acceptances to both Sundance Lab and the Festival Short Film Program for women and people of color. However, a disturbing fall-off is revealed in Sundance Film Festival feature submissions, which drop significantly for women, men of color, and women of color.

Looking specifically at **U.S. dramatic feature films** at the Sundance Film Festival, women directors represent 21.1% of all submissions, and 37% of all acceptances. A positive finding is the increase in dramatic feature submissions by women since the last study conducted in 2009 (from 13.6% to 21.5%). These figures are also significantly higher than the number of women directing top commercial features (4%).

Looking at the intersection of gender and underrepresented status in U.S. dramatic features, white males who represent 30% of the U.S. population accounted for 47.2% of the submissions, and were more than twice as likely as male directors of color (22%) to submit their work to the Festival. Men of color submitted 22% of projects to the U.S. Dramatic section but were accepted at a rate of 15.7%, low in comparison to their U.S. population representation at 20%. For women of color, the data reveals they are even further below full representation than white women. Representing 20% of the U.S. population, women of color submitted to U.S. Dramatic sections at much lower rates (5.8%) but were accepted at a slightly higher rate (7.4%). Less than 15% of directors of submitted projects within each Festival category analyzed were women of color.

In Dramatic categories, both U.S. and International, white women and women of color directors are accepted at rates higher than submissions. The opposite is true for white men and men of color directors in Dramatic features; their acceptance rate is lower than submissions.

AI² assessed submission and acceptance rates for gender, race/ethnicity and transgender identity for the Festival (2017-18) and gender and race/ethnicity for Sundance Institute Artist Programs (2016-17). Sundance Institute also reported data from the 2019 Festival (link to our summary page here), but only selected 2019 data on Festival acceptances is included in the full report, as the full data set was not available in time to complete an analysis. In addition, a prior study of women conducted from 2013-2015 enables a comparison over time for representation of women artists.

Key Findings:

Women directors are increasingly submitting and being accepted to the Festival

- Submissions by women directors to U.S. Dramatic and U.S. Documentary features at Sundance are significantly up from the last study, but still well below 50% overall. Percentages differ among Festival sections but all are below 50%.
- Films directed by women are accepted to the U.S. Dramatic portion of the Festival at a higher rate relative to their submissions. In 2017, 21% of U.S. dramatic features submitted were directed by women and 29% of those films accepted were directed by women. In 2018, 22% of U.S. Dramatic features submitted were directed by women, yet 37% of those films accepted were directed by women.
- Overall, 28% of all feature films and episodic projects submitted to the Festival were directed by women yet 35% of all of the feature films and episodic content screened at the Festival was directed by women.

More work must be done to support directors of color, especially women of color.

- A total of 27.7% of feature films and episodic content and 45% of shorts programmed at the Festival across two years had at least one director of color attached.
- Representing 20% of the U.S. population, women of color submitted to U.S. Dramatic sections at much lower rates (5.8%) but were accepted at a slightly higher rate (7.4%).
- Men of color submitted 22% of U.S. Dramatic sections but were accepted at a rate of 15.7%, still low in comparison to their U.S. population representation at 20%.
- Less than 15% of directors of submitted projects within each Festival category analyzed were women of color.

Short films are much closer to the U.S. population proportions in submissions and acceptances when compared to feature submissions and acceptances.

- In U.S. Short films, women submit at 33.7% and are accepted at 45.5%.
- People of color submit at 34.2% to the U.S. Shorts category and are accepted at 45.5%. These figures are much higher than the U.S. Dramatic category.
- This is evidence that a solid pipeline for directors who are women and people of color exists. Based on a previous study from AI², Women in Film and the Sundance Institute, one barrier to

greater representation at the feature level may occur when women or people of color seek financing for their projects.

Sundance Programs provide a proven talent pipeline from early stage to mainstream commercial success.

- Of the underrepresented directors of top-grossing films from 2015 to 2018, 30% attended a Sundance Lab, screened a movie at the Festival, or had another touchpoint with Sundance prior to their popular movie.
- 35% of the female directors who worked on a top-grossing film from 2007 to 2018 had a touchpoint with Sundance prior to directing that film.

Sundance Institute: Artist Demographics in Submissions & Acceptances

Sundance Institute serves as one of the foremost arts organizations in the United States. Through its artist support programs, Sundance incubates and introduces the next generation of voices to the filmmaking landscape. As the organization behind the Sundance Film Festival, it launches films into our collective culture, and sets an agenda for audiences worldwide. Sundance also nurtures virtual reality projects, installations, and other forms of artistic expression through its lab programs.

Given the contributions Sundance makes to both the broad culture of filmmaking and to the entertainment industry as a whole, ensuring that it represents a diverse set of voices is of paramount concern. For this reason, Sundance Institute and the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (AI²) partnered to analyze existing Sundance data to determine the profile of artists applying to and receiving support.

AI² assessed submission and acceptance rates for gender, race/ethnicity and transgender identity based on applications to the Festival (2017-18). Only gender and race/ethnicity were analyzed for the Sundance Institute Artist Programs (2016-17). Selected data on the 2019 Festival acceptances is also included, as a full data set was not available for a complete analysis. As part of the organization's deepened effort to inform its work through insights, Sundance Institute provided the data, which was collected from filmmakers/applicants at the time of submission to the Festival or an Artist Program. Artist Programs at Sundance cover many disciplines, but this report focuses on the Feature Film and Documentary Film Programs. For the Festival analyses, the focus was on director submissions and acceptances. For Artist Programs, the characteristics of a broader set of storytellers (e.g., producer, director, writer) were assessed. Below, we report on the Festival and artist programs separately.

Sundance Film Festival

What was the demography of directors submitting to the Sundance Film Festival? To answer this question, we analyzed director gender, race/ethnicity, and transgender identity across 26,722 projects submitted for consideration to the 2017 and 2018 Festival.¹ The submissions were across multiple genres (i.e., dramatic, documentaries, episodic) and formats (i.e., feature length, shorts). Further, the submissions were from filmmakers in the U.S. and abroad. We report on director characteristics within each festival category, geographic region (U.S vs. International) and year.

We used our standard convention to determine differences between variables and groups. As with many of our studies, only ± 5 percentage point differences were highlighted below. Using this standard ensures that we do not make noise about inconsequential or trivial (1-2 points) percentage-based deviations. One further note on the analysis is relevant. From year to year, the percentage of films directed by women or underrepresented directors and accepted to Sundance Film Festival can be highly variable. The trend is typically for increases in one year to

be met by decreases in a subsequent year. This variability is likely due to the emphasis on creativity, singularity of vision or voice, and decisions by the programming team. When only two or three years of Festival acceptance data are presented here, we caution against interpreting short-term increases or decreases as indicative of a larger trend in the same direction. Moreover, as there are small sample sizes in some categories, differences may be due to gains or losses of only one or two directors in that category. For these reasons, we draw few conclusions about the over-time patterns as they relate to Festival acceptance figures. However, this analysis points to where there is potential for long term change and importantly, reveals the pipeline for female and underrepresented directors in film and TV.

Dramatic Features

A total of 4,491 projects were submitted across the two-year time frame, with 2,183 U.S. based films and 2,308 International ones. Given that norms surrounding director characteristics (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, transgender identity) may vary by geographic region, the results for U.S. and international submissions and acceptances were presented separately.

U.S. Dramatic Submissions. Of the U.S. dramatic submissions (2,183), a total of 2,407 directors were attached. 79.7% ($n=1,919$) of these directors were male, 19.7% ($n=474$) were female, <1% ($n=13$) were gender non-conforming and <1% was “other/choose not to answer” ($n=1$). Of the directors, 5 reported being transgender (3=males, 2=females). Given the small sample size, no further analyses with transgender directors were reported.

Each project submission was categorized as featuring a female director or not (i.e., male only, gender non-conforming, other/choose not to answer). Table 1 shows the breakdown of projects with a female director attached ($n=461$ films) by year along with the percentage of films accepted into the U.S. dramatic categories. Female directed films filled roughly one-fifth of the submission space (21.1%), with no meaningful differences (>5 percentage points) by year. Most of the submissions were helmed by one solo female (79%, $n=364$), though male/female directing duos accounted for 18.2% of submissions ($n=84$). Only 2.8% ($n=13$) of submitted movies had two female directors. ***Turning to projects programmed, female directed films over indexed relative to their submission rates by 7.8-15.5 percentage points.***

Table 1
U.S. Dramatic Films Submitted & Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	20.8%	28.6%	+7.8
2018	21.5%	37%	+15.5
Overall	21.1%	33%	+11.9

Has the percentage of U.S. dramatic features submitted with a female director attached changed over time? Another project we completed for Sundance Institute and Women in Film Los Angeles examined domestic submissions to the Festival from 2009 to 2012.² As shown in

Table 2, *the total percentage of female U.S. based dramatic submissions has increased in comparison to the four earlier years assessed*. Second, the *proportion of projects programmed has also significantly jumped from 2009-2012 to 2017-2018*. To round out the findings, we examined films selected for the 2019 Festival. Of the U.S. Dramatic films accepted to the Festival, 37.5% had a female director.

Table 2
Change Over Time:
U.S. Dramatic Films Submitted & Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted
2009	13.6%	16.7%
2010	12.4%	19.6%
2011	13%	22%
2012	13.6%	16.1%
2017	20.8%	28.6%
2018	21.5%	37%

In addition to gender, the race/ethnicity of directors submitting U.S. dramatic features in 2017 and 2018 to SFF was assessed. A total of 58.8% ($n=1,398$) of directors were white, 7.9% ($n=188$) Black, 6.8% ($n=161$) Latino/Hispanic, 5.5% ($n=132$) Asian, 2.7% ($n=65$) Middle Eastern, <1% ($n=14$) Native American/First Nations/Indigenous, <1% ($n=6$) Pacific Islander, 4.2% ($n=99$) Biracial/Multiracial, and 13.3% ($n=316$) "other/choose not to answer." ***The percentage of underrepresented filmmakers is 28%, which is 10.7 percentage points below U.S. Census (38.7%).***³

The race/ethnicity measure was then collapsed into three levels: white, People of Color (POC), other/choose not to answer.⁴ We then looked at the percentage of U.S. dramatic projects submitted by directors of color (see Table 3). Directors of color were the sole helmer across 86.3% of projects with a director of color applying to SFF U.S. Dramatic category ($n=542$).

As shown in Table 3, 28.8% of all U.S. dramatic projects submitted had at least one director of color attached. This percentage did not vary by year. In contrast, 57.9% of submitted projects were helmed by white directors and 13.3% were helmed by artists selecting "other/choose not to answer."

Table 3 also illuminates the percentage of projects programmed at the Festival. In 2017, there was virtually no difference in the percentage of projects submitted and programmed by directors of color. When compared to their submission rates, films by directors of color were *less likely* to be programmed in the 2018 Festival. The disconnect between submitted and programmed in 2018 is responsible for the overall gap of -4.5 percentage points across the sample timeframe. To provide additional context, we examined acceptance rates to the 2019 Sundance Film Festival for U.S. Dramatic films by race/ethnicity of the director, though we were

unable to examine submissions to the Festival for the same year. In 2019, a total of 25% of U.S. projects accepted to dramatic categories had a director of color. Though 2019 is significantly lower than 2017, but higher than 2018. As such, it reflects the year-to-year fluctuation that can occur when examining the demographics of filmmakers bringing films to Sundance.

Table 3
U.S. Dramatic Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Directors of Color by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	29.2%	30.6%	+1.4
2018	28.3%	18.5%	-9.8
Overall	28.8%	24.3%	-4.5

Next, we crossed director gender (i.e., male, female, gender non-conforming) and race/ethnicity (i.e., white, Director of Color, Other/Choose not to Answer) to examine how intersectionality was represented in submissions and programmed content.⁵ This analysis was conducted at the director, rather than the project, level. Though we fully crossed the measures, the results for “other/choose not to answer” were not presented in Table 4. As such, the total does not add to 100%.

Table 4
Intersection of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity among U.S. Dramatic Submissions & Acceptances 2017-2018

Project Status	White Males	White Females	White GNC	Male Directors of Color	Female Directors of Color	GNC Directors of Color
Submitted	47.2%	11.4%	<1%	22%	5.8%	<1%
Accepted	41.7%	18.5%	0	15.7%	7.4%	0

Note: GNC refers to gender non-conforming.

As shown in Table 4, white males were more than twice as likely as male directors of color to submit their films to the Festival for consideration. Submissions were four and eight times as likely from white men than white women or females of color respectively. Less than 1% of all projects submitted were from gender non-conforming directors, independent of their race/ethnicity. In terms of population proportions, white males and men of color submit at proportions greater than their share in the U.S. population (30% and 20%, respectively). In contrast, white women and women of color submit at rates that fall below U.S. population percentages for these groups (i.e., 30% and 20%).

The programming choices at the Festival represent a slightly different picture. Projects by white females *overperform* and those by white and male directors of color *underperform* relative to their submission percentages. None of the projects directed by filmmakers identifying as gender

non-conforming were programmed across 2 years of the U.S. dramatic section of the Festival. Though these figures are informative, the two years presented here are not sufficient to determine an overall trend.

When the directors of the films accepted to the Festival in 2019 are evaluated in a similar way, the trends remain stable, with one meaningful difference. Slightly more than one-third (35.8%) of directors are white males in 2019, a decrease of 5.9 percentage points from the combined 2017-18 figure in Table 4. The number of white female directors (28.3%) increased from the previous years. Finally, male (15.1%) or female directors of color (7.6%) do not change substantially.

In total, female filmmakers have increased their submissions and acceptances to the U.S. dramatic categories. An intersectional look at the data suggests that white females were twice as likely to submit to this category than their female peers of color. Examining these trends in light of population statistics, submissions and acceptances from white women underindex relative to their proportion in the population (roughly 30%). The same is true for women of color, who comprise roughly 20% of the population. Male directors of color most closely approximate U.S. population proportions (roughly 20%) in submissions, but do fall short of this figure when it comes to acceptances.

International Dramatic Submissions. Of the 2,308 international dramatic film submissions, a full 2,491 directors were attached. Males comprised 81.2% of the directors ($n=2,022$), with 18.3% female directors ($n=456$), <1% gender non-conforming directors ($n=11$), and <1% of directors selected "other/choose not to answer" ($n=2$). Four directors identified as transgender males.

Similar to the previous section, submitted international films were categorized into a binary measure: female directed or not female directed. Of the 2,308 projects submitted, 19.1% or 440 had a female director attached. Nearly 85% (84.1%, $n=370$) of these films with a female director attached were solo directed.⁶

As shown in Table 5, under a fifth (19.1%) of all international submissions had a female director attached with no variation by year. Yet roughly a third of all accepted international films in 2017 (34.8%) and 2018 (30%) had one or more female directors behind the camera. ***Thus, female-directed content overperformed relative to submission percentages in both domestic and international categories of the Festival in 2017 and 2018.***

Table 5
International Dramatic Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	19.1%	34.8%	+15.7
2018	19%	30%	+11
Overall	19.1%	32.6%	+13.5

Next, we turned our attention to international director race/ethnicity. Of the 2,469 directors, 42.4% ($n=1,048$) were white, 21.1% ($n=520$) Asian, 12.9% ($n=319$) Hispanic/Latino, 2.8% ($n=70$) Black, 5.7% ($n=141$) Middle Eastern, 2.1% ($n=52$) Biracial/Multiracial, <1% ($n=19$) Native American/First Nations/Indigenous, <1% ($n=7$) Pacific Islander, and 11.9% ($n=293$) “other/choose not to answer.” Collapsing this measure, 45.7% ($n=1,128$) of all filmmakers submitting to the international category of the Festival were people of color. Throughout the report, we will continue to use the term “People of Color” to reflect that individuals from the racial/ethnic backgrounds included in the group are not necessarily underrepresented globally and for consistency.

Using this collapsed measure, Table 6 illuminates the percentage of international dramatic films submitted and programmed with directors of color across the last two years of the Festival. Directors of color submitted nearly half (46.4%) of all projects to the International Dramatic category. Over 90% of these projects with a director of color (92.6%, $n=992$) were helmed by solo directors. In 2017, directors of color were programmed at a lower percentage than they submitted (-11.4 percentage points). No meaningful difference was observed among submitted vs. programmed percentages in 2018, however. Data from additional years is needed in order to understand whether any noticeable trend in participation rates has occurred.

Table 6
International Dramatic Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Directors of Color by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	46.2%	34.8%	-11.4
2018	46.6%	45%	-1.6
Overall	46.4%	39.5%	-6.9

The intersectionality of directors can be found in Table 7, using the same approach as outlined earlier in the report. Male directors of color were slightly more likely than their white male counterparts to submit to the international dramatic category. Very little difference emerged between white female directors and female directors of color as well as those identifying as gender non-conforming.

Focusing on programmed directors, white female directors were *more likely* to get a space in the Festival in comparison to their submission rates and male directors of color were *less likely*. Similar to U.S. dramas, no white or gender non-conforming directors of color had projects programmed in the international section of the Festival.

Table 7
Intersection of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity among
International Dramatic Submissions & Acceptances 2017-2018

Project Status	White Males	White Females	White GNC	Male Directors of Color	Female Directors of Color	GNC Directors of Color
Submitted	33.9%	8.5%	<1%	37.7%	7.7%	<1%
Accepted	32.6%	15.2%	0	30.4%	10.9%	0

Summing up, the submissions to the international dramatic category of the Festival were strong when it comes to diversity. Projects helmed by female directors, on the other hand, only represented a fifth of submissions. Similar to U.S. Dramatic films, female directed content was accepted at higher percentages than their submission percentages across both years.

Documentaries

A total of 3,328 documentaries were submitted to SFF across two years (2017-2018). Slightly more documentaries were submitted to the international category ($n=1,723$) than U.S. ($n=1,505$). Similar to dramatic films, these sections of the Festival were treated separately.

U.S. Documentary Submissions. The U.S. documentary submissions had 1,828 directors attached, with 65.9% ($n=1,205$) male, 33.6% ($n=615$) female, and <1% ($n=8$) gender non-conforming. Nine of the directors identified as transgender (8 males, 1 female).

The documentary submissions were reduced into the following measure: those with a female director attached ($n=576$) vs. those with no female director attached ($n=929$). Just over two thirds of the female directed U.S. documentaries were solo helmed (67.9%, $n=391$), 24.8% ($n=143$) were directed by a male/female duo, 6.8% ($n=39$) were helmed by two women, and <1% ($n=3$) were directed by a female/gender non-conforming pair. As shown in Table 8, female directors submitted 38.3% of documentaries, with no meaningful deviation by year. Further, the programmed percentages did not deviate meaningfully (± 5 percentage points) from the submission percentages.

Table 8
U.S. Documentary Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	36.2%	38.2%	+2
2018	40.6%	44.7%	+4.1
Overall	38.3%	41.7%	+3.4

Have these percentages changed over time? Similar to U.S. dramatic features, we had analyzed domestic documentary submissions and acceptances to the 2009 to 2012 Festival for another project. Table 9 illuminates that ***the percentage of submissions with a female director has increased significantly from 2009 to 2018 but not 2017***. A similar pattern emerged with acceptances. No differences were observed from 2009 to 2017 (>5 percentage points) whereas 2018 was significantly higher. It is important to note, however, that 2018 was no different than 2012. Thus, the gains observed in 2018 acceptances should be further studied in subsequent years to see if the pattern shown in Table 9 holds.

Table 9
Change Over Time:
U.S. Documentary Films Submitted & Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted
2009	31.6%	33.3%
2010	28.5%	30.6%
2011	29%	34.3%
2012	29.4%	41.9%
2017	36.2%	38.2%
2018	40.6%	44.7%

After gender, we analyzed race/ethnicity of directors of U.S. documentaries. A total of 63.8% ($n=1,149$) of directors were white, 6.4% ($n=115$) Black, 5.6% ($n=100$) Latino/Hispanic, 3.6% ($n=64$) Asian, 2% ($n=36$) Middle Eastern, 1.1% ($n=20$) Native American/First Nations/Indigenous, <1% ($n=5$) Pacific Islander, 3.8% ($n=69$) Biracial/Multiracial, and 13.5% ($n=243$) "other/choose not to answer." In sum, the percentage of directors of color was 22.7%. This is 16 percentage points *below* U.S. Census (38.7%).

The submissions were then categorized as featuring a director of color ($n=377$) or not. Almost three quarters of these submissions were directed by a solo person of color (72.9%, $n=275$). Table 10 shows the percentage of submissions and programmed films by directors of color. Roughly a quarter of all U.S. documentary films had one or more directors of color attached in 2017 and 2018. In 2017 (see Table 10), a higher percentage (+10.3 percentage points) of U.S. documentaries with directors of color attached were programmed than submitted.

Table 10
U.S. Documentary Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Directors of Color by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	25%	35.3%	+10.3
2018	25.1%	21.1%	-4
Overall	25.1%	27.8%	+2.7

The intersection of gender and race/ethnicity of U.S. documentary directors can be found in Table 11. When compared to white female documentary directors, white males were *more likely* to submit and male and female directors of color were *less likely*. In comparison to U.S. population figures, submissions by white males overindex against proportional representation (roughly 30%). White females (roughly 30%) and men and women of color (roughly 20% each) fall below their population proportion. Similar to other analyses, directors identifying as gender non-conforming submitted less than 1 percent of projects to the U.S. documentary category.

A slightly different picture emerged for programmed documentaries from the U.S. White female directors were more likely than male directors of color to have their U.S. documentaries programmed at the Festival. White males were the most likely to be programmed in the U.S. documentary space and female directors of color occupied less than 10% of the directing posts. Once again comparing to U.S. Census, ***the figures for men of color are near to proportional representation. White male and female directors clock in at a higher percentage than the U.S. population, while women of color fall more than 10% below their portion of the population.*** Again, no films with gender non-conforming directors were programmed across two years (2017-2018) of the Festival.

Table 11
Intersection of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity among
U.S. Documentary Submissions & Acceptances 2017-2018

Project Status	White Males	White Females	White GNC	Male Directors of Color	Female Directors of Color	GNC Directors of Color
Submitted	42.4%	21.2%	<1%	13.7%	8.8%	<1%
Accepted	33.7%	25.3%	0	19.3%	7.2%	0

International Documentary Submissions. 1,723 international documentaries were submitted for consideration to SFF across 2017-2018. The documentaries were helmed by 2,017 directors, with 66% ($n=1,332$) were male, 33.7% ($n=679$) were female, and less than 1% ($n=5$) were gender non-conforming. One director selected “other/choose not to answer.” Across all the submissions, only one director identified as a transgender male.

Over one third of submissions had a female director attached (37.3%). Nearly three quarters of these projects with a female director had one female in the director's chair (74.6%, $n=479$).

In 2017, 40% of the programmed documentaries in this category had a female director attached. This percentage was not meaningfully different from the proportion submitted. A difference was observed between submitted projects with a female director and those programmed in 2018 (-6.8 percentage points).

Table 12
International Documentary Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	37.7%	40%	+2.3
2018	36.8%	30%	-6.8
Overall	37.3%	35%	-2.3

Focusing on race/ethnicity, a total of 48% ($n=951$) of directors were white, 1.8% ($n=35$) Black, 10.9% ($n=217$) Latino/Hispanic, 12.5% ($n=248$) Asian, 6.7% ($n=133$) Middle Eastern, <1% ($n=16$) Native American/First Nations/Indigenous, <1% ($n=3$) Pacific Islander, 3.1% ($n=62$) Biracial/Multiracial, and 16% ($n=317$) “other/choose not to answer.” In total, 36% of filmmakers with projects submitted to the international documentary section were people of color.

As shown in Table 13, directors of color submitted nearly 40% of the documentaries in the international category. Most of these projects with a director of color applied with solo directed content (82.4%, $n=532$). No differences in submission rates were observed across years, but acceptance percentages deviated notably. A fifth of all programmed documentaries were helmed by directors of color in 2018, which is lower than 2017. Across both years, the percentage programmed is significantly lower than the percentage submitted.

Table 13
International Documentary Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Directors of Color by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	37.4%	30%	-7.4
2018	37.6%	20%	-17.6
Overall	37.5%	25%	-12.5

Finally, our intersectional analyses can be found in Table 14. When compared to male directors of color, white males submit more documentaries to the international category and white and female directors of color submit less. Less than 1% of all projects were submitted by gender non-conforming directors, independent of race/ethnicity. Turning to documentaries programmed, stories by white filmmakers *over performed* relative to their submission rates whereas filmmakers of color *underperformed*.

Table 14
Intersection of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity among
International Documentary Submissions & Acceptances 2017-2018

Project Status	White Males	White Females	White GNC	Male Directors of Color	Female Directors of Color	DNC Directors of Color
Submitted	31%	16.9%	<1%	23.1%	12.8%	<1%
Accepted	41.7%	16.7%	0	16.7%	4.2%	0

Overall, the submissions for the international documentary section of the Festival attracted the interest of female helmers and directors of color. Though, the acceptance percentages of these underserved directors were often under their submission rates.

Short Films

A total of 17,546 short films were submitted to Sundance Film Festival across two years. A full 8,831 were submitted to the U.S. category and 8,715 were submitted to the international category. Given the pronounced differences above in submissions by location, we report on these categories separately.

U.S. Short Film Submissions. The 8,831 projects were accounted for by 9,852 directors. Just over two thirds (67.4%, $n=6,641$) were male, 31.7% ($n=3,122$) female, <1% ($n=78$) gender non-conforming, and <1% ($n=11$) "other/choose not to answer." A full 25 short film directors identified as transgender, with 10 male, 11 female, 2 gender non-conforming, and 2 could not be identified for gender.

Female directed projects accounted for 33.7% ($n=2,978$) of all submissions, which did not vary by year. The vast majority of female directed U.S. shorts had only one female helmer attached (80.5%, $n=2,396$). Table 15 shows the comparison of submitted vs. programmed shorts across two years of the Festival. ***Roughly 45% of all programmed U.S. shorts featured at least one female director. Clearly, female directed shorts were programmed at a higher percentage (+12.6 in 2017, +10.8 in 2018) than they were submitted.***

Table 15
U.S. Short Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	32.6%	45.2%	+12.6
2018	34.9%	45.7%	+10.8
Overall	33.7%	45.5%	+11.8

Of those directors with racial/ethnic information supplied, just over half (53.8%, $n=5,242$) were white, 8.1% ($n=791$) Black, 8.1% ($n=789$) Hispanic/Latino, 8% ($n=776$) Asian, 2.6% ($n=258$) Middle Eastern, <1% ($n=57$) Native American/First Nations/Indigenous, <1% ($n=34$) Pacific Islander, 4.8% ($n=463$) Biracial/Multiracial, and 13.7% ($n=1,331$) "other/choose not to answer." Together, a full 32.5% of the short film directors are people of color. This is 6.2 percentage points below U.S. Census (38.7%).

The percentage of short films submitted with one or more directors of color attached can be found in Table 16. Most of these shorts were directed by only one helmer of color (86%, $n=2,596$). As shown in Table 16, little deviation was observed in submission percentages for 2017 or 2018. Significantly, acceptances were notably higher (2017=+8.6 percentage points, 2018=+13.4 percentage points) than submissions. ***It is important to point out that the proportion of short films with one or more directors of color attached is above U.S. census across both years of Festival programming.***

Table 16
U.S. Short Film Submitted vs. Accepted w/Directors of Color by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	33.3%	41.9%	+8.6
2018	35.2%	48.6%	+13.4
Overall	34.2%	45.5%	+11.3

Finally, an intersectional lens was applied to short film directors across two years of submissions and Festival programming. As shown in Table 17, white males directors were the most likely to submit to the Festival. White females and male directors of color were more likely to submit U.S. shorts than were females of color. Similar to all other results, white and gender non-conforming directors of color submitted fewer than 1% of projects across the years examined. Most groups were programmed at comparable rates to submissions, save one. ***Short films directed by females of color over performed (9 percentage points) relative to submission rates.***

Table 17
Intersection of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity among
U.S. Short Film Submissions & Acceptances 2017-2018

Project Status	White Males	White Females	White GNC	Male Directors of Color	Female Directors of Color	GNC Directors of Color
Submitted	36.9%	16.5%	<1%	21.1%	11.2%	<1%
Accepted	33.8%	16.2%	0	23%	20.3%	0

In total, the short film results presented in this section reveal the pipeline for aspiring directors by gender, and race/ethnicity, and transgender identity. Roughly a third of all short submissions were female directed. For underrepresented directors or directors of color, the submission percentage at the Sundance Film Festival in 2017-2018 falls shy (<5 percentage points) of U.S. Census.

International Short Films. A total of 8,715 short films were submitted to the international program at Sundance Film Festival. These shorts were helmed by 9,520 directors. Two thirds of the directors (66.5%, $n=6,329$) were male, 32.9% ($n=3,132$) female, <1% ($n=58$) gender non-conforming, and <1% ($n=1$) was "other/choose not to answer." Twelve directors identified as transgender, with 9 male, 2 female and 1 gender non-conforming.

Just over a third of all international short submissions had a female director attached (34.5%, $n=3,007$). No differences emerged by year (see Table 18). The vast majority of international shorts with a female director were solo directed (85.2%, $n=2,563$). The acceptances are displayed in Table 18, ***showing female directed content taking up over half of the space in the international shorts programs in 2017 and 2018.***

Table 18
International Short Films Submitted vs. Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	34.5%	57.5%	+23
2018	34.6%	55.9%	+21.3
Overall	34.5%	56.8%	+22.3

The racial/ethnic breakdown of directors submitting to the international short film program is as follows: 49.2% ($n=4,629$) white, 2.1% ($n=200$) Black, 9% ($n=849$) Hispanic/Latino, 16.5% ($n=1,552$) Asian, 6.7% ($n=633$) Middle Eastern, 1% ($n=92$) Native American/First Nations/Indigenous, <1% ($n=19$) Pacific Islander, 3.2% ($n=300$) Biracial/Multiracial, and 12.1% ($n=1,140$) "other/choose not to answer." Collectively, directors of color account for 38.7% of those international helmers submitted to the Festival.

Table 19
International Short Film Directors Submitted vs. Accepted w/Directors of Color by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	39.4%	55%	+15.6
2018	40.1%	32.4%	-7.7
Overall	39.7%	44.6%	+4.9

Those international short films with a director of color attached accounted for 39.7% of the total pool, with no deviation by year. As shown in Table 19, directors of color over indexed in

2017 (+15.6) when it came to programming percentages -- in comparison to submitted percentages -- whereas they underindexed in 2018 (-7.7). A full 91.4% of the international shorts directed by a person of color were solo helmed.

A breakdown of the intersectional nature of gender and race/ethnicity of directors can be found in Table 20. While submitting the highest percentage of shorts, white and male directors of color underperform relative to their application percentage. ***The opposite story is true of white and female directors of color, both of which overperform in comparison to their submission percentages.*** Only one white gender non-conforming director had a short programmed at the Festival.

Table 20
Intersection of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity among
International Short Film Submissions & Acceptances 2017-2018

Project Status	White Males	White Females	White GNC	Male Directors of Color	Female Directors of Color	GNC Directors of Color
Submitted	33%	15.9%	<1%	25.7%	12.7%	<1%
Accepted	22.9%	22.9%	1.2%	20.5%	21.7%	0

Overall, the findings for the U.S. and international short film sections suggest that the pipeline for emerging talent is diverse. It is important to note that all short films were treated the same in this section. Put differently, we did not assess genre (dramatic, documentary) or style of presentation of shorts (live vs. animated) which are variables that have correlated with director gender in previous research. Thus, the findings should be interpreted with caution.

Episodic

Across the last two years, 910 directors have submitted episodic stories to the Festival. Slightly less than 70% of the directors were male (69.8%, $n=635$) and 29.7% ($n=270$) were female. Five directors identified as gender non-conforming (<1%) and five as transgender (4 male, 1 we could not confirm).

The percentage of stories submitted by female directors to the episodic section of the Festival was 33.6% ($n=249$), with no deviation by year (see Table 21). Of the female directed stories, 63.9% had only one female director. Acceptances varied significantly, with 2017 substantially higher than 2018. In 2018, female-directed episodic stories were programmed at a significantly lower percentage than their submission percentage. As such, no clear trend can be discerned.

Table 21
Episodic Stories Submitted vs. Accepted w/Female Directors by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	33.4%	37.5%	+4.1
2018	33.7%	25%	-8.7
Overall	33.6%	30.6%	-3

Just over half of submissions to the episodic story section of the Festival were from directors that identify as white (56.1%, $n=500$). The remaining directors were 11.1% ($n=99$) Black, 6.7% ($n=60$) Hispanic/Latino, 5.3% ($n=47$) Asian, 2.2% ($n=20$) Middle Eastern, <1% ($n=8$) Native American/First Nation/Indigenous, <1% ($n=6$) Pacific Islander, 4.5% ($n=40$) Biracial/Multiracial, and 12.5% ($n=111$) “other/choose not to answer.”

Just over a third (34.1%) of all episodic stories were directed by a person of color. Nearly three quarters of these submissions were solo helmed (71.9%, $n=182$). As shown in Table 22, 2018 was a significantly stronger year for stories from directors of color being programmed than 2017.

Table 22
Episodic Stories Submitted vs. Accepted w/Directors of Color by Year

Year	Submitted	Accepted	Difference
2017	36.6%	18.8%	-17.8
2018	31.5%	30%	-1.5
Overall	34.1%	25%	-9.1

Director gender and underrepresented status were crossed and the results are shown in Table 23. When compared to white females and males of color, white male directors were *more likely* to submit episodic projects to SFF whereas females of color were *less likely*. Independent of race, less than 1% of projects with gender non-conforming directors were submitted to the Festival. In terms of acceptances, white males and female directors of color overperformed – relative to submission percentages – whereas males of color underperformed. And, 2.6% ($n=1$) of programmed stories were directed by white gender non-conforming directors. No stories by gender non-conforming directors of color were programmed across two years of the Festival.

Table 23
Intersection of Director Gender & Race/Ethnicity among
Episodic Submissions & Acceptances 2017-2018

Project Status	White Males	White Females	White GNC	Male Directors of Color	Female Directors of Color	GNC Directors of Color
Submitted	38.8%	17.2%	<1%	20.9%	10.3%	<1%
Accepted	53.8%	12.8%	2.6%	10.3%	15.4%	0

Though one of the newer sections, the episodic space functions similarly on inclusion measures as other categories of content at SFF.

Artist Programs

Sundance Institute offers support, education, and opportunity to artists through a variety of programs. Its labs, fellowships, and funds reach the next generation of filmmakers and enable new stories to reach screens large and small. The purpose of this section is to explore the demographic distribution of artists submitting to two pillars of Sundance Institute's various Artist Programs in 2016 and 2017: the Feature Film Program and the Documentary Film Program. These are the largest of Sundance Institute's programs, and correspond to its Festival categories. For this reason, we chose to focus on these arenas. We further selected 2016 and 2017 as years to evaluate as the submissions process to the labs in 2018 was ongoing during the time of analysis. Additionally, filmmakers who attend the labs in 2016 or 2017 are potentially those who would go on to submit to the Festival with their completed films in the years analyzed above.

Once again, data for the following analyses were provided by Sundance Institute and collected via self-report at the time an individual applied to the Artist Program.⁷ A process similar to the Festival submission data was undertaken by the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative to analyze the data. However, one additional category within race/ethnicity was part of the submission process for the Artist Programs: other. This group was included in data on people of color.

The demography of accepted fellows to Sundance Institute's programs is also presented below, with the following caveat. The submissions process for the Artist Programs generates one set of admitted fellows for the Labs and Fellowships. However, open call for submissions may be supplemented through invitation processes or other forms of recruitment. Additionally, international submissions are collected through a separate procedure and not accounted for in this analysis. Finally, when participants or Fellows are selected, they may have collaborators who are also invited to join the programs, but who do not appear in the applicant listings. For these reasons, we do not compare the percentage of individuals who submit to those who are selected to attend Artist Programs, and we caution readers not to do so either. Data presented here are intended to illuminate how Sundance Institute supports diverse artists, while noting that the applicant and acceptant pool may differ in important ways.

Feature Film Program

Artist Programs to which individuals can apply that are housed within the FFP include the Creative Producing Lab, January Screenwriters, and June Screenwriters Labs. Submission data across each of these programs was analyzed below. Additionally, participants in the June Directors Lab are included in the accepted artist percentages.

Gender. Examining gender across all programs in the FFP from 2016 to 2017, 5,778 applicants were assessed. 54% ($n=3,118$) of applicants were male, 44.5% ($n=2,572$) were female, <1% ($n=25$) were gender non-conforming, <1% ($n=45$) were of another gender, and <1% ($n=18$) originally chose not to answer, but could not be confirmed. As shown in Table 24, the Creative Producing Lab has the highest percentage of submissions from females, which was consistent across both years evaluated. The January and June Screenwriters labs did not significantly differ overtime in the percentage of female applicants to either lab.

Table 24
Submissions by Females to FFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Submissions	2017 Submissions
Creative Producing	55.2%	54.8%
January Screenwriters	42.9%	44.1%
June Screenwriters	46.5%	47.6%

Race/Ethnicity. Turning to race/ethnicity, of the individuals applying for FFP labs, 49% ($n=2,834$) were white, 9.9% ($n=571$) were Black/African American, 9.4% ($n=542$) were Multiracial, 9.1% ($n=524$) were Latino/Hispanic, 9.1% ($n=526$) were Asian, 2% ($n=113$) were Middle Eastern, <1% ($n=22$) were Native American/Indigenous, <1% ($n=23$) Pacific Islander, 1.1% ($n=62$) Other, and 9.7% ($n=561$) preferred not to answer. These figures were collapsed, such that 41.2% of applicants were people of color, which is higher than U.S. Census figures for the population (38.7%).

There were few significant differences by year across the lab programs in terms of race/ethnicity. The Creative Producing lab increased submissions from people of color between 2016 and 2017. However, the January Screenwriters lab received fewer applications from people of color in 2017 relative to 2016.

Table 25
Submissions by People of Color to FFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Submissions	2017 Submissions
Creative Producing	37.8%	43%
January Screenwriters	44.9%	37.5%
June Screenwriters	46.5%	43.4%

Intersectional Analysis. Finally, we crossed gender and race/ethnicity to examine submissions to FFP labs. For this analysis, both years were combined. As shown in Table 26, submissions to the Creative Producing Lab were more likely to come from white females than men of color. The greatest share of applicants to the January Screenwriters Lab were white males. For June Screenwriters Labs, there were no meaningful differences by race and gender.

Table 26
Submissions by Gender and Race/Ethnicity to FFP Programs: 2016 & 2017

Lab/Program	White Males	White Females	Males of Color	Females of Color
Creative Producing	24.6%	28.2%	16.8%	23.7%
January Screenwriters	27.5%	20.8%	21.7%	18.6%
June Screenwriters	25.8%	22.7%	22.2%	22.2%

Acceptances to the Feature Film Program. As noted above, we also examined acceptances to the FFP in 2016 and 2017. Table 27 includes data on the percentage of females who joined FFP lab programs in each year considered. Given the small sample sizes of Fellows in each year (less than 20), fluctuations from one year to the next are due to changes in only a few filmmakers per lab. Notably, females represented half or more of the participants at the Directors Lab in both 2016 and 2017, and in the 2016 Creative Producing and 2017 January Screenwriters Labs.

Table 27
Acceptances of Females to FFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Fellows	2017 Fellows
Creative Producing	66.7%	33%
January Screenwriters	27.8%	53.3%
June Screenwriters	25%	33.3%
June Directors	50%	60%

The proportion of Fellows from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups was also evaluated (see Table 28). Again, 50 to 70% of Directors Lab participants were people of color across both years. The June Screenwriters Lab sees a similar proportion of people of color (75%, 60%). The Creative Producing and January Screenwriters Labs fluctuate from year to year, but reflect a contingent of diverse voices who receive artistic support.

Table 28
Acceptances of People of Color to FFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Fellows	2017 Fellows
Creative Producing	66.7%	33.3%
January Screenwriters	35.3%	73.3%
June Screenwriters	75%	60%
June Directors	70%	50%

An intersectional examination of Sundance FFP Lab participants and Fellows reveals that across the two years examined, ***men and women of color overindex against U.S. population proportions (roughly 20%) across the Labs, with the exception of women of color at the June Screenwriters Lab.*** Though, due to small sample sizes, these percentage should be interpreted with caution.

Table 29
Acceptances of Gender and Race/Ethnicity to FFP Programs: 2016 & 2017

Lab/Program	White Males	White Females	Males of Color	Females of Color
Creative Producing	16.7%	25%	25%	25%
January Screenwriters	31.3%	15.6%	28.1%	25%
June Screenwriters	15.4%	15.4%	53.8%	15.4%
June Directors	15%	25%	30%	30%

Documentary Film Program

The DFP analysis includes individual applicants to the Documentary Fund, the Documentary Creative Producing Lab, and the Art of Nonfiction Fellowship. The Documentary Fund and Art of Nonfiction Fellowship each provide grant funding to supported artists. Documentary Fund Fellows may also be selected to participate in two Labs: Doc Edit & Story, or the Doc Music & Sound Lab. Below, submission data was analyzed and presented for these support programs followed by information on program Fellows.

Gender. Of the 1,528 individuals that applied to the DFP across 2016 and 2017, 52.7% ($n=805$) were male, 47.1% ($n=719$) were female, <1% ($n=1$) were gender non-conforming, <1% ($n=2$) identified with an “Other” gender, and <1% ($n=1$) chose not to answer and could not be confirmed. As shown in Table 30, there was some variability by year. The percentage of female applicants to the Creative Producing lab decreased from 2016 to 2017. In contrast, female submissions to the Art of Nonfiction Fellowship increased. The DFP fund had the lowest percentage of females applying out of all DFP programs in 2017.

Table 30
Submissions by Females to DFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Submissions	2017 Submissions
Creative Producing	79.2%	65.1%
DFP Fund	44.9%	45.1%
Art of Nonfiction	45%	54.2%

Race/Ethnicity. Of the 1,529 individuals submitting to the DFP, 53.4% ($n=817$) were white, 6.9% ($n=105$) Hispanic/Latino, 8% ($n=122$) Black/African American, 8.8% ($n=134$) Asian, 5.5% ($n=84$) Middle Eastern, <1% ($n=9$) Native American/Indigenous, <1% ($n=6$) Pacific Islander, 7.2% ($n=110$) Multiracial, 2.7% ($n=42$) Other, and 6.5% ($n=100$) did not answer. Overall, 40% of the DFP applicants were people of color, once again exceeding proportional representation for the U.S. population.

Table 31
Submissions by People of Color to DFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Submissions	2017 Submissions
Creative Producing	41.7%	47.2%
DFP Fund	39.6%	39.3%
Art of Nonfiction	25%	54.2%

Across individual Lab programs, submissions fluctuated by year. Among Creative Producing applicants (see Table 31), the percentage of people of color submitting to the Lab increased between 2016 and 2017. The Art of Nonfiction Fellowship also saw an increase in people of color applying to the program. This finding should be interpreted with caution, as the increase reflects an additional 8 people of color who submitted to the program in 2017, and the sample size of applicants is small.

Intersectional Analysis. Data from both years was combined to examine submissions to the DFP (see Table 32). White females or females of color were more likely to apply to the Documentary Creative Producing Lab than their male counterparts. It should be noted that no men of color submitted to the Documentary Producing Lab in 2016. In contrast, white males more often applied to the DFP fund than males and females of color. White females were more likely than females of color to submit an application for this funding. Males of color were the least likely to apply for the Art of Nonfiction Fellowship.

Table 32
Submissions by Gender and Race/Ethnicity to DFP Programs

Lab/Program	White Males	White Females	Males of Color	Females of Color
Creative Producing	16.9%	33.8%	13.8%	32.3%
DFP Fund	29%	24.4%	21.2%	18.1%
Art of Nonfiction	31.8%	27.3%	18.2%	22.7%

Across these artist support programs, it appears that a diverse set of filmmakers apply to participate. These figures indicate that a pool of interested women and people of color are eager to expand their abilities and apply their talent to filmmaking. Moreover, it appears that these individuals see a value in requesting help from Sundance.

Acceptance to Documentary Film Programs. We examined the profile of individuals who were accepted to DFP labs or as program Fellows for 2016 and 2017. See Table 33. Turning first to gender, females were the majority of Lab participants or Fellows for all Documentary Programs, except the 2016 Doc Music & Sound Lab (25%) and the DFP Fund in 2017 (43.9%).

Table 33
Acceptances of Females to DFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Fellows	2017 Fellows
Documentary Creative Producing	100%	60%
DFP Fund	51.6%	43.9%
Art of Nonfiction	60%	75%
Doc Edit & Story	62.5%	88.9%
Doc Music & Sound	25%	50%

The proportion of Fellows from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups was also evaluated (see Table 34). Nearly all of the labs and fellowships either meet or exceed the U.S. population proportion for directors of color (38.7%). Only the 2017 Art of Nonfiction Fellows fall below this figure. From year to year, the percentage of directors of color in four of the five programs below fluctuate by a large margin. However, in some cases this reflects small sample sizes for the lab/fellowship and should not be interpreted as indicative of a larger trend without additional years of data included in the analysis.

Table 34
Acceptances of People of Color to DFP Programs

Lab/Program	2016 Fellows	2017 Fellows
Documentary Creative Producing	75%	40%
DFP Fund	48.4%	53.7%
Art of Nonfiction	40%	25%
Doc Edit & Story	50%	77.8%
Doc Music & Sound	75%	50%

An intersectional examination of Sundance DFP Lab participants and Fellows reveals that across the two years examined, there is no clear pattern for any group. As Producers, no men of color participated in the Documentary Producing Labs. In terms of the Documentary Fund, Fellows closely reflect population figures, with the exception of white females. However, white females comprised over half of Art of Nonfiction Fellows in the 2 years studied. Women of color were most likely to participate in the Doc Edit & Story Lab, while men of color were most often admitted to the Doc Music & Sound Lab.

Table 35
Acceptances of Gender and Race/Ethnicity to DFP Programs: 2016 & 2017

Lab/Program	White Males	White Females	Males of Color	Females of Color
Doc Creative Producing	22.2%	22.2%	0	55.6%
DFP Fund	27.8%	19.4%	25%	26.4%
Art of Nonfiction	11.1%	55.6%	22.2%	11.1%
Doc Edit & Story	17.4%	21.7%	13%	47.8%
Doc Music & Sound	25%	12.5%	37.5%	25%

Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis was to examine demographic information of individuals who submitted projects to the Sundance Film Festival for the 2017 and 2018 festivals and how those relate to the demographics of accepted filmmakers. Overall, 28% of feature-length and episodic projects submitted to the Festival across two years had at least one female director, as did 34.1% of shorts. Of feature films and episodic content accepted in 2017 and 2018, 35% had a female director, while 51.4% of short films did. In terms of directors of color, 35.2% of feature-length and episodic projects and 37% of shorts were submitted by directors of color. A total of 27.7% of feature films and episodic content and 45% of shorts programmed at the Festival across two years had at least one director of color attached.

Additionally, the profile of individuals who submitted projects and the individuals who were accepted to Sundance Institute's Feature Film and Documentary Film Programs in 2016 and

2017 was assessed. Looking to the individuals who submit to one of the premiere independent festivals and artist support programs in the United States reveals information on the pipeline for directing talent and the incoming diversity of the next generation of filmmakers. It also provides a reflection of Sundance's own metrics around submissions and acceptances. Several major trends emerged from the analysis, which are reviewed below.

The Gender Pipeline is Healthy, but Not Equal

Women may be 51% of the population, but they are not 51% of the individuals who submit projects to the Sundance Film Festival. In fact, across each of the categories examined, roughly 20-40% of submissions were from females. Documentary films were the site of the largest percentage of female-directed projects submitted, which is on par with the results from our previous work. Notably, roughly one-third of submissions to shorts programs were female-helmed in the years examined. Dramatic films had the fewest female-directed submissions, at around 20%.

The results of this study not only showcase how many women submit their films for consideration to the Sundance Film Festival, they also illuminate the pipeline for female directors. Women represent 55% of Director's Lab Fellows in Sundance's Feature Film Program. At the U.S. short film level, women directed 33.7% of films submitted to Sundance, and 45.5% of the films programmed in the festival had a female director. The first crack in the pipeline comes as women work to complete a feature film after attending labs or creating shorts. In 2017 and 2018, roughly 20% of the projects applying to Sundance Film Festival's U.S. Dramatic sections had a female director. While one-third of projects in U.S. Dramatic sections were female-directed in 2017-18, it is clear there is a drop-off from the ranks of aspiring female feature film directors to those who finish, submit, and screen a film at Sundance.

One cause for the decline from shorts to features is the existence of barriers that impede women's ability to finance their productions. This explanation aligns with what we have found in our prior investigations with Sundance Institute and Women in Film Los Angeles, namely, that gendered financial barriers preclude more women from working as directors in independent film.⁸ An important ramification of these financial impediments is the reduced opportunities women receive later in their careers.

Based on data from the DGA, 25% of television episodes had a female director in the 2017-18 season.⁹ The nadir for women is reached when considering top-grossing movies. Across the 100 highest-earning films each year from 2007 to 2018, only 4% of directors were female.¹⁰ The lack of women directing at the highest echelons of filmmaking is startling, given the robust number of women entering the field through festivals like Sundance. In fact, 35% of the female directors who worked on a top-grossing film from 2007 to 2018 had some interaction with Sundance prior to directing that popular movie—as a lab attendee, through festival screenings, or other touchpoints. The results in this analysis speak to the need for the film industry to take additional measures to ensure that talent is not lost at different career stages, particularly for one portion of the population.

Directors of Color Send Films to Sundance

The findings regarding directors of color illuminate the divide between U.S. and international content. While roughly one-quarter of dramatic and documentary features submitted to Sundance had a director of color in the U.S., closer to half of dramatic films (46.4%) and 37.5% of documentaries in the international category did. At the short film level, the difference narrows-- 34.2% of U.S. shorts had a director of color while 39.7% of international shorts did. The reasons for this disparity merit further research and reflection on the differences in support for directors of color domestically and in other parts of the world.

Looking more closely at American films, as noted above, submissions to the Sundance Film Festival demonstrate that filmmakers of color were at near proportional representation to the population in short films and directed 45.5% of programmed short film offerings. This declines when feature films are considered; directors of color submitted 28.8% of dramatic films and helmed 24.3% of programmed dramatic features.

For directors of color, the pipeline is primarily flat from independent to top-grossing features. Twenty-four percent of episodic television directors in the 2017-18 TV season were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups—roughly the same as the percentage of directors of Sundance-screened U.S. dramatic feature films.¹¹ And, the percentage of underrepresented directors across the 100 top films of 2018 is 22.3%.¹² It must be noted, however, that 2018 reflects a three-year high point, and directors of color were only 17.3% of the directors of the 300 top-grossing movies from 2016 to 2018.

Taken together, the present analysis indicates that the talent pipeline drops off after the creation of short films. Once again, Sundance plays an important role in establishing the career pathway for directors of color. Of the underrepresented directors of top-grossing films from 2015 to 2018, 30% attended a lab, screened a movie at the Festival, or had another touch point with Sundance prior to directing a top-grossing movie. One area to further explore is differences in the percentage of directors from various cultural or racial/ethnic backgrounds who are able to move through the pipeline to direct TV or higher-budget fare. For example, the DGA does not indicate that any Native directors or directors from the Middle East worked across episodic TV series in 2017-18. However, the current study reveals that these directors are clearly interested in pursuing careers behind the camera in film.

What prevents more directors from moving from shorts to features? In a previous investigation with the Sundance Institute, we identified several of the barriers that face underrepresented dramatic directors.¹³ Apart from financial barriers reported by the filmmakers, the most significant impediment was that the subject matter and stories that these directors chose to tell were perceived to lack market value. These stories were often focused on characters from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. Funding for these movies was thus more difficult to raise. A second obstacle noted by the filmmakers was that their own or their family's financial situation provided little security for a movie making career. As with gender, barriers related to

both finance and a filmmaker's identity appear to stall careers. Given the low percentage of directors of color working in documentaries, it is possible that similar impediments can be found in that realm as well.

Submissions from Women of Color Fall Woefully Short

By far the group with the smallest rate of submissions to the Sundance Film Festival is women of color. Within each category, less than 15% of directors submitting projects were women of color. These percentages are below U.S. Census figures, as women of color represent roughly 20% of the U.S. population. International documentaries, and both U.S. and international short films see the highest submission rates from women of color, followed by episodic projects. Shorts by female directors of color are also programmed above their submission rates.

Once again, the submission and programming figures speak to the career pipeline for female directors of color. While 7.4% of directors of U.S. dramatic features at the Sundance Film Festival were women of color, 6% of TV episodes in the 2017-18 season had an underrepresented female helmer.¹⁴ Finally, at the level of top-grossing films, only 9 women of color worked across 1,335 directors (<1%) of the most popular 1,200 films across 12 years.¹⁵ These paltry percentages affirm that women of color face considerable obstacles as they pursue careers in film--barriers that arise from both their race/ethnicity and their gender.

Artist Programs are Further Evidence of a Larger Pipeline

Two Artist Programs at the Sundance Institute further emphasize the number of women and people of color who are interested in pursuing a career in filmmaking. Across both the Feature Film Program and the Documentary Film Program, women and people of color submit to the labs in healthy proportions. In fact, many of the labs see submissions at or exceeding proportional representation to the population.

What these figures suggest is that the nature of Sundance's outreach results in applications to their programs from the very communities they aim to support. Additionally, these findings show that a pool of filmmakers is eager to develop their talent and hone their craft to enter the film industry. Support from the Sundance Programs can take the form of financial assistance, creative input, training, developing industry networks, mentorship, and a range of other opportunities that stem from the Institute's history and deep connections. We have previously demonstrated that there are no difference in the completion rates for films by male and female filmmakers who participate in these Artist Programs.¹⁶

As Sundance continues to supply the pipeline with the next generation of filmmaking voices, the question must become: will the industry be ready to hire them and/or finance their work? Until this query is answered, these two Artist Programs will remain a necessary part of nurturing talent, but with few outlets to provide sustainable careers for the fellows that emerge.

Limitations

A few limitations of the study must be noted. First, data were provided from Sundance and were based on applicant's reported gender, race/ethnicity, and transgender identity. As such, individuals may potentially have inputted inaccurate data into online form fields; due to the size of the data set and scope of the project, we were not able to confirm how often this occurred. While this may affect only a small number of responses, some analyses already consist of small sample sizes. Caution should be used in interpreting those findings.

A second limitation comes from the percentage of applicants reporting "other/choose not to answer." This is not a small percentage of the data, particularly for race/ethnicity. Without a complete accounting of the identity measures, it is impossible to know the true proportion of directors from underrepresented groups submitting to the festival. Moreover, including this missing information could change the overall figures regarding racial/ethnic groups.

A further limitation concerns the nature of the submissions themselves. Although we believe we have accounted for all festival submissions, record-keeping disparities or submissions not captured through online systems might exist. We have ensured that all accepted films at the festival were accounted for in the submissions database.

Finally, while we have some data to engage in over time comparisons, only two years are included in this analysis. As we know from previous investigations, trends for films by women or people of color accepted to Sundance can vary from year to year. We noted earlier in the paper that we urge caution when interpreting over time trends for this very reason. As the third year of data from the 2019 Festival demonstrates, the percentages of white male directors with films accepted to the Festival did vary from the years before. Thus, any one-year deviation in a positive or negative direction is likely to change in a following year and a longer time period should be examined to determine any major gains or losses for different groups.

Overall, this research is crucial to understanding the diversity of the next and even the current generation of new filmmakers. As a leader among festivals, Sundance can showcase upcoming talent, nurture budding directors, and launch careers. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for carrying this talent into wider industry work must be borne by others. Until the pipeline to TV, top-grossing films, and higher-budgeted entertainment is widened to allow more diverse talent through, these figures will tell the story of talent left untapped and stories untold.

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Footnotes

1. Sundance Institute provided us with 2017 and 2018 submission data consisting of 26,721 projects, each in one row regardless of the number of directors on the project. Immediately we began to modify the data set to prepare it for analysis, mostly in a structural manner as explained below. Throughout the process we endeavored to maintain the integrity of all submitted demographic information. How individuals reported their gender and ethnicity, who directed their projects, and how many directors were attached to their project were all taken as provided with some exceptions noted later in this footnote.

We first organized the data set by standardizing director names and separating first, second, etc. directors on multiple lines per project in cases where there were two or more directors. We also needed to verify the accuracy of 'accepted' projects as provided by Sundance Institute. Thus, all projects tagged as 'accepted' were checked against online festival programs. The 2017 Sundance Film Festival program was retrieved from: http://www.sundance.org/pdf/film-guide/SFF17_FilmGuide_Web_Dec12.pdf. The 2018 Sundance Film Festival program was retrieved from: http://www.sundance.org/pdf/film-guide/SFF18_PPG.pdf. Discrepancies between what was provided to us and what was programmed at the festival were resolved by the Sundance Institute.

There are four types of discrepancies: First, five accepted projects that were submitted to the wrong category (e.g., an international documentary project was submitted to the U.S. Documentary Feature Films section) were modified to reflect the correct festival category. Second, two projects that were programmed at the festival and not tagged as 'accepted' were altered to be included in the accepted analyses; the opposite situation occurred twice as well. Third, two accepted projects that were each submitted twice had their respective duplicate entry in the data set removed.

Lastly, we added three projects (two U.S. Dramatic Features, one International Dramatic Feature) that were accepted into the 2018 Sundance Film Festival (3 white directors: 1 female, 2 male), but were missing from the submission data set provided. These changes are reflected in the following numbers. Data reflecting 2019 Sundance Film Festival projects was received January 17, 2019.

Only a few attributes of directors were analyzed for this report. These variables were handled differently prior to analyses. Projects were identified as 'complete' if gender and ethnicity information was provided for one or both directors. For gender, we defined the options 'transgender', 'other/choose not to answer', and a blank cell as 'missing'. For these missing data we investigated each project and director to assign one of four values to gender: Male, Female, Gender Non-conforming, and Missing/Unknown.

Research assistants used information provided to look up gendered or gender neutral pronouns of individuals on online databases (i.e., Variety Insight, Studio System, IMDbPro, fundraising website, news websites, personal webpages, and social media). Individuals consistently using or described using (as in a biography) 'they', 'their', or other synonymous pronouns, in the absence of gendered pronouns ('him', 'she') were identified as 'Gender Non-conforming'. First, one assistant gathered evidence to assist with decision-making. Then, a second researcher used the evidence provided to make a determination of Gender, gathering more evidence if it was necessary. If there was a disagreement, one of the study's authors resolved the discrepancy. Finally, a third confirmed the second assistant's decision and the data was analyzed as such. We did not apply this method to ethnicity.

There were instances where individuals admitted to making a mistake during the submission process (e.g., they entered information for a second director but in another cell mentioned there was not a second director). For example, one submission field stated, "There is no second director - clicked above box by accident. Sorry guys." Only when the information provided was clear we modified the data provided accordingly.

Other times, individuals submitted multiple projects and provided information on gender or ethnic origin in one or some of their submissions, but not on other projects. When individuals left information blank or selected 'other/choose not to answer' for gender and ethnicity, we searched within the submission data provided (festival and labs) for individuals that submitted multiple times and provided Ethnicity at least once. We used this method to complete the missing information if data could be found to definitively link individuals.

After examining each project, counting only the first and second director if there was one, the sample consisted of 29,999 directors across 26,722 projects. However, this number decreases for Gender and Ethnicity analyses after excluding some missing data. First, 3 projects had no director attached and 9 directors were groups, meaning an organization or company, (across 10 projects) and were thus omitted across all analyses. All selected 'other/choose not to answer' for Gender. For Ethnicity, 7 selected 'other/choose not to answer', 3 submitted as 'Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial', and 2 reported 'Native American, First Nations or Indigenous'.

425 directors did not provide an answer for Gender (their answer was blank). Each were looked up for gender, the data for 394 directors were collected, and a remaining 31 unconfirmed were excluded from analyses of director gender. This approach was taken so that we could compare our previous Festival submission data (2009-2012) with the years examined here. 64 individuals selected 'Transgender' for Gender. These individuals were looked up as well and 4 were unable to be confirmed as either male, female, or gender non-conforming.

The combined 35 directors (31 blank, 4 transgender) were all second directors on projects with more than one director. Therefore, when analyzing projects as opposed to directors, we report on the remaining 35 co-directors attached. In sum, the final analyses for Gender examine 29,952 directors across 26,712 projects.

Outside of groups, 1,174 individuals reported "other/choose not to answer" for Gender (3.92% of the total number of directors). Of those, 1,157 were found and coded for Gender. We were unable to confirm the remaining 17 individuals and thus report them as 'other/choose not to answer.' At the project level, 12 projects were directed by one director that opted 'other/choose not to answer' for Gender. These individuals are included in the analyses of gender.

A total of 472 directors left 'Ethnicity' blank. With the method mentioned above (searching for director information already existing within the data set), 47 individuals were found, thereby reducing the number of 'blanks' to 425. Only 6 projects across the sample were 'blank' for the director's Ethnicity and therefore excluded in analyses for Ethnicity (in addition to groups). The 419 remaining 'blanks' for Ethnicity were all second directors on projects with two or more directors.

Thus, the final analyses for Ethnicity examines 29,562 directors across 26,706 projects. In addition to 'blanks,' 4,312 directors submitted 'other/choose not to answer' for their Ethnicity (14.59%). Using the same method for 'blanks' we reduced this number to 3,900 directors. This translates to 3,473 projects

where one or both directors remained as ‘other/choose not to answer’ for Ethnicity. There were 427 projects with two or more directors that had at least one director’s reported Ethnicity. These were included in all analyses for Ethnicity.

The data were based on information provided by the individual or group submitting the project. Individuals submitting to the festival complete a form as part of the process. As part of this procedure for the first director (and second if applicable) the person submitting is asked to select one option for Gender (*Male; Female; Gender Non-conforming; Transgender; Other/Choose not to Answer*) and one for Ethnicity (*Asian; Bi-racial or Multi-Racial; Black, African-American, or other African Descent; Caucasian/White; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern; Native American, First Nations or Indigenous; Pacific Islander; Other/Choose not to answer*). It was also possible for individuals to not respond to these questions (leaving them blank).

There are a few limitations to note regarding this process. First, ‘other’ and ‘choose not to answer’ are confounded into one category. The former provides information that the director is not one of the options available, while the latter suggests they refuse to provide an option at all. 2019 data provided by Sundance corrected this error, but in order to draw comparisons to previous years we combined them for analysis. Second, by including ‘transgender’ as an option alongside the other categories for gender, individuals were unable to provide both their transgender identity as well as their gender (e.g., a transgender male would either select ‘male’ or ‘transgender’). Third, the individual completing the form may not be the same individual who directed the project. In certain submissions individuals indicated that they could not or chose not to provide such information on another’s behalf. For example, an individual wrote in a separate field “She would kill me if I filled this line in.”

Unlike gender, we did not further investigate blanks or ‘other/choose not to answer’ and analyzed these missing groups as their own categories for ethnicity. For gender, we are confident in gendered and gender-neutral pronouns conveying gender identity. Labels related to race/ethnicity are not used to the same degree or as routine descriptors of individuals. Therefore, identifiable information for ethnicity is much more difficult to ascertain than gender.

Individuals were able to select ‘transgender’ as a category for director gender in the submission process. We report on just those individuals who selected this option upon providing their demographic information. As individuals were not able to provide both their transgender identity and their gender (e.g., a transgender female would only be able to indicate their gender as ‘female’ or ‘transgender’) there may be other directors in this data that identify as transgender but did not provide such information. Therefore, data on transgender directors in the sample should be interpreted with caution.

2. Smith, S. L., Pieper, K., & Choueiti, M. (2014). *Exploring the Barriers and Opportunities for Independent Women Filmmakers Phase I and II*. Report prepared for Sundance Institute and Women in Film Los Angeles, Female Filmmakers Initiative.

3. U.S. Census Bureau (2016). Quick Facts. Retrieved July 17, 2017 from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>

4. Consistent with our other U.S.-centric reports on the entertainment industry that focus on the marginalization of Black, Latinx, Asian, Native (Indigenous and Pacific Islander), Middle Eastern, and Mixed/Other groups, we compare these categories as one collective (often referred to as ‘underrepresented’) to a White/Caucasian category. As noted in the text, this report includes the

demographics of international directors and projects. As such, we will refer to this category as People of Color to retain consistency in the analyses and acknowledge that these individuals are not necessarily underrepresented globally.

5. If race/ethnicity was coded for one of the directors in a pair, then the project was placed into the 'White' or 'Director of Color' levels of this variable. 'Other/Choose not to answer' was used when a single director selected this for race/ethnicity or one member of a directing pair chose this option and the second director's race/ethnicity was left blank.

6. The breakdown of the directing duos are as follows: 3.6% ($n=16$) were two female directors; 11.8% ($n=52$) were a male/female pair; one pair was a Female and Gender Non-conforming pair (<1%); and the final pair was Female and 'Other/Choose not to Answer'.

7. We received data sets from Sundance Institute containing lists of individuals that submitted to specific artist programs at SI across two years, 2016 and 2017. Because of the nature of the data provided, we report only on the first individual applying to any program in cases where more than one person collectively applied. Said differently, any creative collaborators associated with a submitted project are not reflected in this report. Our methods for collecting gender and race/ethnicity information match the festival approach. However, in the case of the submission data provided by Sundance Institute, the options 'other' and 'choose/prefer not to answer' were separate. Therefore, 'other' is analyzed as its own separate category for *gender* and *race/ethnicity*. When reporting certain *race/ethnicity* analyses, individuals who identified as 'other' are subsumed within directors of color.

Across all submission data provided, there were no 'blanks' for gender or race/ethnicity. In terms of gender, 128 submissions were provided with 'prefer [or 'choose'] not to answer' as the selected option. Using Sundance Institute data and online resources, the gender of 109 individuals was determined. The remaining 19 remained as 'prefer/choose not to answer' and were included in all analyses.

There were 20 submissions where the option 'transgender' was selected for gender. All but 1 of these submissions were reclassified as male or female based on gendered pronoun use or other data found within Sundance Festival or Artist Program information (12 were male and 7 were female). Eight (seven transgender males, one transgender female) submitted to the DFP (all to the DFP Fund across 2016 and 2017). Eleven transgender individuals submitted to the FFP across 2016 and 2017 (all amongst January and June Screenwriting programs); five of them were male and six were female.

For race/ethnicity, 856 applicants selected 'prefer [or 'choose'] not to answer'. Using information only found within other artist program files or festival data, racial/ethnic identification was found for 195 individuals. The remaining were left as 'choose not to answer'.

8. Smith, Pieper, & Choueiti (2014).

9. Directors Guild of America (2018). *DGA Report: Higher Percentage of Directing Jobs Are Going to Women and Directors of Color, but Overall Picture is Mixed*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.dga.org/News/PressReleases/2018/181010-Episodic-Television-Director-Diversity-Report.aspx>

10. Smith, S.L., Choueiti, M., Choi, A., & Pieper, K., (2019). *Inclusion in the Director's Chair? Gender, Race & Age of Directors across 1,200 Top Films from 2007 to 2018*. Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. <http://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/inclusion-in-the-directors-chair-2019.pdf>
11. DGA (2018).
12. Smith, Choueiti, Choi, & Pieper (2019).
13. Pieper, K., Choueiti, M. & Smith, S.L. (2014). *Race and Ethnicity in Independent Films: Prevalence of Underrepresented Directors and the Barriers They Face*. Working Paper.
14. DGA (2018).
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16. Smith, Pieper & Choueiti (2014).