



Hollywood: Her Story

January 2021 ENewsletter

2020 Films Added to National Film Registry

Each year since 1988, films have been inducted into the National Film Registry at the Library of Congress reflecting their cultural, historic and artistic importance. In 2020, 25 films were selected bringing the total films in the registry to 800. Nine of those 25 films were directed by women. In past newsletters, we have profiled Lois Weber whose movie *Suspense* was inducted and Kathryn Bigelow whose movie *The Hurt Locker* was inducted. In addition to these two women and the women in the following paragraphs, these women also had their movies inducted in 2020: Aloha Wanderwell – *With Car and Camera Around the World*, Lourdes Portillo – *The Devil Never Sleeps* and Joan Lander – *Mauna Kea: Temple Under Siege*.



Writer and director **Ida May Park** was one of Universal's most important female directors during the silent film era. *Bread*, released in 1918, was her recently inducted movie. Hired as a writer in 1909, Park wrote 50 films during her career of which she said, "It was because directing seemed so unsuited to a woman that I refused the first company offered me. I don't know why I looked at it that way, either. A woman can bring to this work splendid enthusiasm and imagination; a natural love of detail and an intuitive knowledge of character. All of these are supposed to be feminine traits, and yet they are all necessary to the successful director. Of course, in order to put on a picture, a woman must have a broadness of viewpoint, a sense of humor and firmness of character – there are times when every director must be something of a martinet – but these characteristics are necessary to balance the others."



Originally an actress, **Ida Lupino** turned to directing after being suspended from acting for objecting to decisions made by studio executives. She was the only woman in the 1950s who both directed and produced films within the Hollywood studio system. In 1950, she became the Director Guild of America's second female director member. *Outrage*, the movie she directed that was inducted, was released in 1950. She has another movie in the registry – *The Hitch-Hiker*, released in 1953. When asked in 1972 about why there weren't more women directors, she said, "I'd love to see more women working as directors and producers. Today it's almost impossible to do it unless you are an actress or writer with power . . . I wouldn't hesitate right this minute to hire a talented woman if the subject matter were right."



In 1980, writer, director and editor, **Kathleen Collins** became the first African-American woman to produce and release a full-length feature film since the 1920s. Her 1982 film *Losing Ground*, which was selected for induction, is her only full-length feature film. She said, "I don't spend a lot of time worrying about how I am perceived by other people. . . The artist must be fundamentally honest. What you should get is his or her soul. If you get anything else, they have cheated themselves first, and they have cheated you second."

The first African-American woman to have her full-length feature film released for national distribution, **Julie Dash** now has two films held in the National Film Registry. Her 1982 film *Illusions* was inducted in 2020. Her 1991 film *Daughters of the Dust* was inducted into the registry in 2004. Dash said, "They think that if you don't get a Hollywood film you just stop in your tracks and become a nurse. I'm



a filmmaker, I was a filmmaker long before those people were in the studios, probably, and I think it's a little bit too late to turn and run now. This is what I do: I make a film, and if I can't make a film, I teach, or I teach while I make it. I will always be a writer. Filmmaking is filmmaking. I tell stories, I like to take an idea and turn it into something visual that's compelling, exciting, meaningful. And that's the task at hand no matter whether it's a five-minute-30-second commercial spot or a feature film. That's what I enjoy doing and that's what I have been doing."

Women in front of and behind the camera make the movies that we all welcome into our hearts and homes. Women across all the areas of moviemaking from actress to animator, editor to stuntwoman, costume designer to screenwriter, producer to director have contributed to the success of the movie industry since its founding in the 1890s. Help us celebrate these women who are written into movie history in *Hollywood: Her Story*.

Jill S.Tietjen and Barbara Bridges

[Visit Our Website](#)