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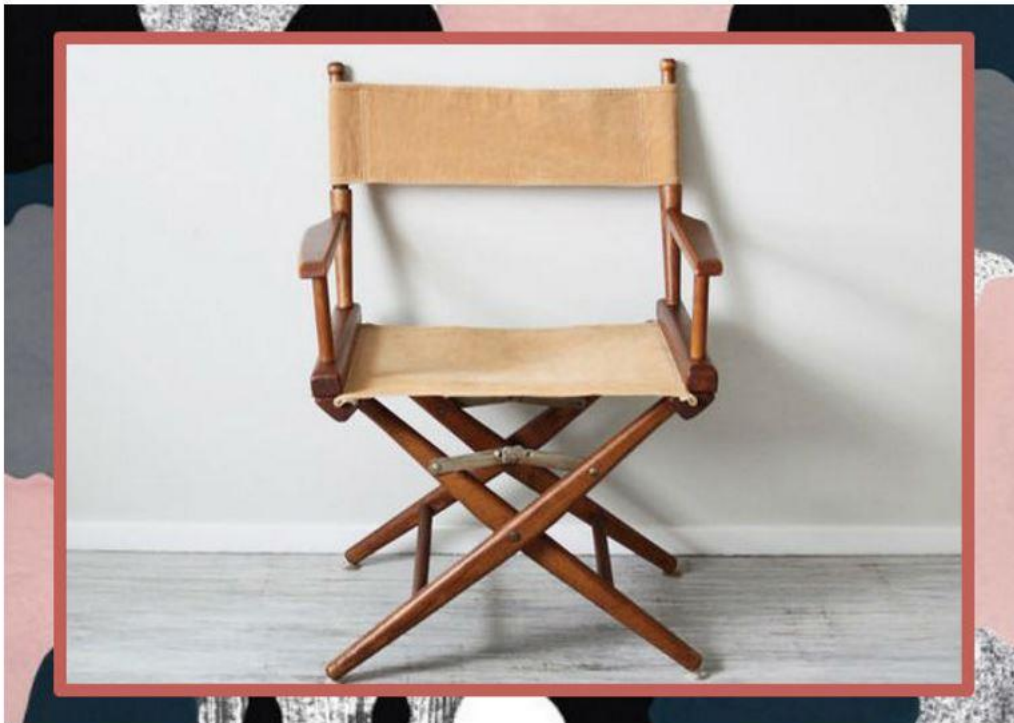
LIFESTYLE

MM Bioré

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Female Directors That Deserve More Love

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Last week, Paul Feig was **announced** as the distinguished artist for the American Film Institute Conservatory's 2017 directing workshop for women. And we have some thoughts.

Don't get us wrong—we love Paul Feig, and he clearly believes in making movies that challenge stereotypes about women. Just look at his list of credits—he directed *Spy*, *Ghostbusters*, *The Heat*, and *Bridesmaids*, and he also created the 1999 cult hit TV show *Freaks and Geeks*, a series where once-adversarial characters Lindsay Weir and Kim Kelly eventually become close friends and confidants.

But come on, AFI—there are dozens of incredibly talented *female* directors out there who we think could have fit the bill! Here are just a few:

KELLY-FREMONT CRAIG

Kelly Fremont-Craig has only directed one feature film so far. But that one film, *The Edge of Seventeen* (starring the brilliant Haley Steinfeld and Haley Lu Richardson) proves that Fremont-Craig has a ton of amazing ideas and untapped potential.

The Edge of Seventeen is a coming-of-age story about a girl that's *actually directed* by a woman (what a novel concept). The film illustrates what it's like to be a teenager who is self-important yet plagued with insecurity. Pointed out by Vanity Fair's Richard Lawson as being the "best teen movie in years," *The Edge of Seventeen* earned Fremont-Craig a Directors Guild of America Award for First-Time Feature Film and a Toronto Film Critics Association Award for Best First Feature. Fremont-Craig also co-produced the film with renowned TV producer and writer James L. Brooks, who was apparently convinced to work with Fremont-Craig after she told him "nobody will ever work as hard as I do."

If that's not badass, we don't know what is.



AMMA ASANTE

Amma Asante is probably best-known for directing *Belle*, a 2013 period piece starring *Doctor Who*'s Gugu Mbatha-Raw, but we don't think that she's been getting enough credit for the stories she's been able to tell.

Asante's most recent work is *Where Hands Touch*, which is—like *Belle*—a period piece that stars a strong mixed-race female protagonist (Amanda Stenberg). Most recently, she's directed *A United Kingdom*, which was released in North America just last week. It's about an African-American man who falls in love with a white woman, and similarly explores issues concerning race. Asante has said that *A United Kingdom* "brings together everything I am as a filmmaker," and based on the film's [positive reviews](#) we think it shows.



MIRA NAIR

Mira Nair is an Indian-American director and filmmaker who's been making movies since the late 70s—and we have no idea why more people don't know she exists. Her most recent film, *Queen of Katwe*, was released in 2016 and received rave reviews, still holding on to a 92% approval rating on [Rotten Tomatoes](#).

Nair won the Cannes Film Festival Audience Award in 1988 for her movie *Salaam Bombay!* as well as the Independent Spirit Best Feature Award for *Mississippi Masala* in 1993, and her previous work has ranged from the Hilary Swank-led biopic *Amelia* to political thriller *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (starring *Rogue One* "It Boy" Riz Ahmed). Several of Nair's first films were also partially set in India, and it's clear that she cares a lot about telling stories that lovingly depict the culture in which she grew up.



DEE REES

Dee Rees is a stone cold boss, and we're going to tell you why. Reason One: Rees' first feature film, *Pariah*, is all about a queer black teenager. Reason Two: Legendary director Spike Lee used to mentor her. Reason Three: She's working with Shonda *freakin'* Rhimes to direct a TV adaptation of Isabel Wilkerson's book "The Warmth of Other Suns." Reason Four: Her latest film, *Mudbound*, premiered at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival, and Netflix just paid over \$12 million to get the U.S. streaming rights for it.

Rees has also directed an episode of *Empire* as well as *Bessie*, a TV film about the life of blues singer Bessie Smith, so she's clearly invested in telling stories about strong, talented black women such as herself.



SARAH POLLEY

Ok, so Sarah Polley's not American, but how can you *not* include her in a list about amazing female directors? Polley started out as an actress, but she's now better known for directing films such as *Away From Her*, *Take This Waltz* and the autobiographical, extremely personal documentary *Stories We Tell*. The stories Polley tells often seem small and individual, but are simultaneously moving and deeply understood by people from many different walks of life. Polley will also be directing *Alias Grace*, a miniseries based on Margaret Atwood's 1998 novel, and we can't wait to see how it turns out.

