



BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

7 – 18 October 2015

in partnership with



GEENA DAVIS INTRODUCES GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON GENDER IN MEDIA AT BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

**NEW PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE ON GENDER IN MEDIA, WOMEN IN
FILM AND TELEVISION (UK) AND BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL**

Abi Morgan, Shami Chakrabarti and Bonnie Greer amongst the high profile panellists

Thursday 8th October

The BFI London Film Festival, in partnership with American Express, today hosted in collaboration with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and Women in Film and Television (WFTV), the Institute's first Global Symposium on Gender in Media, outside the US, the day after the festival opened with Sarah Gavron's highly anticipated *Suffragette*.

Geena Davis, who was the opening keynote at the Global Symposium, presented to a packed audience at the BFI Southbank, said:

"Today at our symposium at the BFI London Film Festival, we are in a room full of the most influential business leaders and content creators who work tirelessly for equality and the empowerment of women on screen and behind the scenes. I'm thrilled to see the momentum building for better representation of women in the media. Here's what I say: if they can see it, they can be it."

BFI CEO Amanda Neville, CBE said: *"At the BFI we want film to be central to everyone's life – culturally, creatively, industrially and economically, and within every part of that mission diversity and equality are right at the heart of it all. The BFI Film Fund launched its 3 ticks initiative last year to address exactly this and provide an opportunity for women to be better represented in key areas of filmmaking."*

I am delighted the BFI stands alongside The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, and Women in Film & Television to bring you today's Symposium, and feel extremely fortunate to be working with such extraordinary and talented women to shine a light on these issues; I want to be part of any conversation, scheme or initiative that gives women a way in."

Clare Stewart, Festival Director, said: *“We welcomed Geena Davis as the keynote speaker for our global symposium in partnership with both her Institute for Gender in Media and Women in Film and Television to ensure that we have positive representation for women and girls in film. We have 46 feature films directed by women in the Festival this year, which sounds fantastic until you do the math and work out that it is still only 20% of our programme. Something has to change because that figure is broadly representative of the films we consider for the programme, so clearly we have more work ahead of us to also ensure that the vision of creative women gets supported, nurtured and realised.”*

Elizabeth Karlsen, Chair of Women in Film and Television and Producer, Number 9 Films, said: *“The Geena Davis Institute has rigorously informed the discussion around gender in film and television. Thankfully this discussion has come to the fore once again. I am honoured to be a part of the Symposium, which I hope will further the effort to ensure that what seems to be a watershed moment for women’s expertise and voices in front of and behind the camera leads to equal representation across all aspects of the industry.”*

The Global Symposium, the first time the BFI and The Institute have collaborated, explored the impact of film on global issues concerning women and girls, addressing gender equality in film and empowering women and girls through film. Keynote speakers included, the American Academy® Award-winning actor and Founder and Chair of the Institute **Geena Davis**, Chair of Women in Film and Television, and Producer, Number 9 Films **Elizabeth Karlsen** (Carol) and BFI CEO **Amanda Nevill** CBE, with panellists including director of Liberty (The National Council for Civil Liberties) **Shami Chakrabarti** CBD; CEO of the Institute **Madeline Di Nonno**, writer/ director **Destiny Ekaragha** (Gone Too Far!); global advocate for the rights of women and children **Baroness Goudie**; writer and critic **Bonnie Greer**; CEO, Ending Domestic Violence **Deborah Jamieson**; Director of Film4 **David Kosse**; producer **Laurie MacDonald** (He Named Me Malala); writer/ director **Deepa Mehta** (Beeba Boys, Midnight’s Children); screenwriter **Abi Morgan** (Suffragette, The Iron Lady); Managing Director and VP UK-Ireland Sales and Operations Google **Eileen Naughton**; and BFI London Film Festival Director **Clare Stewart**.

Founded by Academy Award®-winning actor and advocate Geena Davis, the Institute is the only research-based organisation working within the media and entertainment industry to engage, educate, and influence the need to dramatically improve gender balance, reduce stereotyping and create diverse female characters in entertainment.

The London Symposium, which will be followed by Global Symposiums in India and Brazil in 2016, brought together high level thought leaders, politicians, CEOs and key media and entertainment decision-makers with significant storytellers and content creators for the two key panel discussions.

The first panel was introduced by BFI CEO Amanda Nevill CBE and explored the impact of film on global issues concerning women and girls, focusing on organisational strategies and interventions. In this context, the BFI outlined how it is addressing gender equality in film including its ground-breaking ‘three-ticks’ initiative aimed at ensuring BFI-backed films represent the diversity of the UK.

The second panel was introduced by producer Elizabeth Karlsen, Chair of WFTV which celebrates its 25th Anniversary in 2015. The focus was on storytelling from around the world and empowering women and girls through film.

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59th BFI London Film Festival / LFF Press Office

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About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI London Film Festival

BFI London Film Festival is Britain's leading film event and one of the world's best film festivals. It introduces the finest new British and international films to an expanding London and UK-wide audience and attracts significant international film industry participation. LFF is a compelling combination of red carpet glamour, friendly audiences and vibrant exchange. LFF provides an essential profiling opportunity for films seeking global success; promotes the careers of British and international filmmakers through its industry and awards programmes and positions London as the world's leading creative city.

Clare Stewart biography

Clare Stewart's twenty year programming career has encompassed leadership roles as Festival Director, Sydney Film Festival (2006-2011) and the inaugural Head of Film Programs at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image in Melbourne (2002-2006) as well as various roles at the Australian Film Institute (1996-2001), including Exhibition Manager, and programmer and Committee Member of the Melbourne Cinémathèque (1995-2002). She has been BFI Head of Cinemas and Festivals since October 2011.



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