



# BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

7 – 18 October 2015

in partnership with



## GEENA DAVIS TO LAUNCH 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

London, Tuesday 23rd June 2015

The BFI London Film Festival, in partnership with American Express, today announces a new collaboration with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (GDI) and Women in Film and Television (WFTV) that will see the Festival host the Institute's first Global Symposium on Gender in Media outside the US on October 8<sup>th</sup> 2015, the day after the festival opens with Sarah Gavron's highly anticipated *Suffragette*.

Geena Davis will be the opening keynote at the Global Symposium, to be held at BFI Southbank. **Geena Davis said** "*Media images have a huge impact on our perceptions, and on our social and cultural beliefs and behaviors. Our new global study, explores how global films may be reinforcing negative gender stereotypes with movie audiences of all ages.*"

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. At the London Global Symposium, the Institute will present new global research which investigates the influence of international films on diverse film audiences in the UK, India, Nigeria, France and Brazil. The Global Symposiums and research are funded with the generous support of the Oak Foundation.

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

The first panel will be introduced by BFI CEO Amanda Nevill CBE and explore the impact of film on global issues concerning women and girls, focusing on organisational strategies and interventions. In this context, the BFI will outline how it is addressing gender equality in film including its groundbreaking 'three-ticks' initiative aimed at ensuring BFI-backed films represent the diversity of the UK.

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

**Madeline Di Nonno, CEO, Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media** said: *"We're thrilled to be partnering with the BFI and Women in Film and TV UK. Geena and I are extremely grateful to the Oak Foundation for their support of this new study and our mission."*

**Amanda Nevill CBE, BFI CEO** said *"I can't think of a more perfect or important discussion to be having at this year's BFI London Film Festival than the issue of gender equality in film, TV and the media. I am very proud we are partnering with The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and Women in Film and Television and feel extremely lucky to be working with such extraordinary and talented women to shine a light on these issues."*

**Clare Stewart, Festival Director, BFI London Film Festival** said *"It's absolutely fitting to combine forces with two committed, engaged and women-led organisations for this Global Symposium the day after Suffragette opens the BFI London Film Festival."*

**Elizabeth Karlsen, Chair, Women in Film and Television** said *"WFTV aims to empower women across all disciplines of film and television in an effort to redress not only the woeful under representation of women in our industry, but also the all too frequent marginal roles on offer to women. The collaboration with the BFI, who have a clear mandate to promote gender equality and the Geena Davis Institute, whose research is seminal and integral to an understanding of the qualitative and*

*quantitative representation of women in film provides a much needed platform from which to incite change. I am delighted to be a part of this Symposium at the start of the BFI London Film Festival."*

**Kate Kinninmont MBE, CEO, Women in Film and Television** said *"Geena Davis understands the power of film to change perceptions and we all need to work together to accept the challenge of portraying women, in all their diversity, as what they are: half the world. We are all part of a movement whose time has come. "*

**FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:**

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**An image of Geena Davis can be downloaded at [www.image.net /LFF 2015](http://www.image.net/LFF)**

**Notes to Editors**

**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 an iconic international film festival that supports London's position as the world's leading creative city. It presents the best new British and international films to an expanding London and UK-wide audience. It provides career-enabling opportunities for British and international filmmakers through its industry and awards programmes.

**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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**About the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media:**

Founded by Academy Award®-winning actor Geena Davis, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, at Mt. St. Mary's University, is the only research-based organization working with media and entertainment companies with cutting-edge research, education and advocacy programs to dramatically improve how girls and women are reflected in media targeting children 11 and under. For more information, visit: [www.seejane.org](http://www.seejane.org)

#### **About Women in Film and Television (UK)**

Women in Film & TV (UK) is the leading membership organisation for women working in creative media in the UK, and is part of an international network of over 13,000 women worldwide. Members of our organisation come from a broad range of professions spanning the entire creative media industry. We produce a programme of industry events throughout the year, present a prestigious awards ceremony every December, and run a highly regarded mentoring programme for women in the industry. We host regular networking evenings, collaborate with industry bodies on research projects and lobby for women's interests.

[www.wftv.org.uk](http://www.wftv.org.uk)

The logo for the Oak Foundation features the word "OAK" in a large, blue, serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a stylized globe showing the continents. Below "OAK" is the word "FOUNDATION" in a smaller, blue, serif font.  
**OAK**  
**FOUNDATION**