

Maybe This Finally Changes Everything for Women in the Industry?

Penny Marshall knew the score. I was commiserating with the late filmmaker who'd helmed the classic *A League of Their Own* when she recounted how she'd hit the film industry's male outfield wall: ("Women can't play baseball, let alone open films!") Her encouragement to me to direct my own baseball screenplay was laced with advice: "Bring lots of green paint. You're gonna need to touch up the field." She went on to recap her difficulties in casting the female baseball player roles. She had seen actors who weren't athletes, and athletes

who couldn't act. Happily for all, she ultimately found Geena Davis who could do both.

Watching Geena in the new documentary *This Changes Everything*, it's clear gender barriers still exist in both baseball and film. Director Tom Donahue has packed his movie with a lineup of female all-stars showcasing the challenges they face and putting the spotlight on the creative women left out of it. A particularly moving sequence chronicles female directors in a legal battle, fighting to swap prejudice for parity. It makes one think of all the films they

"9 times out of 10, I'm going to give you something so multi-dimensional because I know what I'm bringing in is something much deeper than the words they put on that page." —Taraji Henson



"We see Dick all the time. I just wanted to see more Jane." —Geena Davis

"In order for true systemic change to happen, it has to be inclusive, everybody has to come along with it and change needs to happen immediately."

—Cate Blanchett



With the DGA (Directors Guild of America) at their side, the Original Six fought a battle for gender equality inside Hollywood in the early 1980s. Joelle Dobrow, Nell Cox, Susan Bay Nimoy, Dolores Ferraro, Lynne Littman and Victoria Hochberg.



"Women's creative input is not making it into our nation's storytelling."

—Maria Giese



Meryl Streep with director Tom Donahue

could've made, all the unread scripts women write, and how an industry, rebalanced with an equal point of view, could enrich our cultural world.

As this important documentary makes clear, the press has a part to play, too: Media can focus less on women's looks, and more on their talent. Critics can review films and TV through a Bechdel Test lens, evaluating the quality of female characters, or their absence, on both big and small screens. We can all take



"The door has to be opened. We just want inclusion."

—Meryl Streep

"I have worked with two female directors and one of them was me." —Natalie Portman

the testimony in this film to heart. Because if *This Changes Everything* finally does what its title hopes, there's a slew of female filmmakers waiting in the bullpen, just itching to get into the game. We've got stories. We've got paint. And we're ready to roll.

—Devra Māza