

*WOMEN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA: A NON-FICTION FILM ON SIX  
FEMALE DIRECTORS OF TURKEY*

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"I, Su Balođlu, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.  
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that  
this has been indicated in the thesis."

  
SU BALOĐLU

## **ABSTRACT**

*WOMEN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA:*  
A NON-FICTION FILM ON SIX FEMALE DIRECTORS OF TURKEY

Su Balođlu

Master of Arts in Cinema and Television

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melis Behlil

May, 2015

In Turkey, women have started making films in the 1950s. Since then, women of different generations and socio-cultural backgrounds have been contributing to our cinema industry and culture. The short non-fiction film *Women with a Movie Camera* documents six of Turkey's women filmmakers. Through one-on-one interviews with Zeynep Dadak, Canan Evcimen, Biket İlhan, Merve Kayan Leyla Özalp, and Handan Öztürk, the film focus on these directors' personal experiences of working in a male dominated industry. At the same time, by way of using excerpts from fictional films, the film questions the subjects' performativity in front of the camera, as they talk about their testimonies.

Keywords: cinema, woman director, non-fiction, fiction, performance

## ÖZET

*KAMERALI KADINLAR:*

TÜRKİYE'NİN ALTI KADIN YÖNETMENİ ÜZERİNE BİR BELGESEL

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Mayıs, 2015

Türkiye'de kadınlar film yapmaya 1950'lerde başlamışlardır. O yıllardan beri farklı jenerasyonlardan ve sosyo-kültürel arka planlardan bir çok kadın sinema endüstrimize ve kültürümüze katkıda bulunmaktadır. *Kameralı Kadınlar* kısa belgeseli Türkiye'nin altı kadın yönetmenini konu alır. Belgesel, Zeynep Dadak, Canan Evcimen, Biket İlhan, Merve Kayan Leyla Özalp ve Handan Öztürk ile yapılan birebir röportajlar aracılığıyla bu kadınların erkek egemen bir endüstride çalışma deneyimlerine odaklanır. Film aynı zamanda, kurmaca filmlerden parçalar kullanarak bu kadınların tanıklıklarını aktarırken kamera önündeki performatif davranışlarını ve anlatım biçimlerini sorgular.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sinema, kadın yönetmen, belgesel, performans, kurmaca

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I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melis Behlil for her guidance throughout my studies. She has helped me place this production work into theoretical perspective and offered her personal academic sources when the library was not enough. I am truly grateful to her.

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to my committee members, Assist. Prof. Dr. Defne Tüzün and Lec. Dr. Esin Paça Cengiz for their helpful comments and suggestions. I consider myself lucky to have had the opportunity to work with these two wonderful scholars.

I would like to thank my co-director Merve Bozcu for being such an amazing friend and a co-worker. Without her valuable ideas and help, the film *Women with a Movie Camera* would not have been possible. Learning to make a film with her has been a wonderful experience so far.

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents whom introduced me to the art of cinema at a very young age. They are the first filmmakers that I have ever known, and from them I learned about the joy of creating and the endless possibilities of playing with the medium. And for that I am extremely grateful.

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2015 Su Yapım / Kadir Has  
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VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Siyah fon.</p> <p>Görüntü açılır. Handan'ın evi.</p> <p>Kesme. Canan Evcimen'in boş röportaj koltuğu.</p> <p>Canan yerine geçer.</p> <p>Kesme. Zeynep Dadak, bel plan. Röportaj öncesi hazırlıklar.</p> <p>Kesme. Orta genel plan. Leyla Özalp röportajı öncesi hazırlıkları. Leyla röportaj koltuğundadır.</p> <p>Kesme. Canan, bel plan. Canan saçlarını düzeltir.</p> <p>Kesme. Handan, yakın plan.</p>	<p>Handan Öztürk'ün röportaj öncesi konuşması duyulur.</p> <p><u>HANDAN</u> Bir tek şu aynada kendime bakmam lazım. Gözüm görmüyor banyodan.</p> <p><u>HANDAN</u> Fazlalık var mı? Tamam, bu kadardır.</p> <p><u>SU</u> Biz hazırız hemen hemen.</p> <p><u>CANAN</u> Peki efendim, ben de hazırım.</p> <p><u>MERVE</u> Son ayarlarımızı yapıyoruz. Su bir de sen otursana.</p> <p><u>SU</u> Oturayım. Kendi yerime mi oturayım?</p> <p><u>ZEYNEP</u> Anlatmayacağımız şeyler olduğu zaman sesin açık olduğunu unutmayalım. Off-the-record söyleyeceğimiz...</p> <p>Su ve Merve'nin kameranın arkasından gelen konuşmaları duyulur.</p> <p><u>MERVE</u> Bu arada bir de ona bakalım. White balance'a...</p> <p><u>SU</u> White balance, menüye girmek lazım.</p> <p><u>MERVE</u> Yok, sen kadraja bak...</p> <p>Görüntüde olmayan bir takım teknik malzeme hazırlığının sesleri duyulur.</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Biket İlhan, göğüs plan.	<p><u>MERVE</u> Burada da akıyorum.</p> <p><u>SU</u> Biket İlhan, kayıt bir.</p>
Kesme. Su ve Leyla, amors plan. Kameraman çekimi işaretler.	Kameramanın el çırpma sesi.
Kesme. Siyah fon. Başlık belirir: KAMERALI KADINLAR.	<p>Başlığın belirmesiyle Leyla'nın anlatımı duyulur.</p> <p><u>LEYLA</u> Kadınların kamera önünde bile varolması çok kolay değildi...</p>
Başlık kaybolur. Leyla, bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u> ...ki kamera arkasına geçip bir güç göstermelerini düşünürsek... Bu da zaten şöyle olmuş, kamera önündeki kadınların kamera arkasına geçmeleriyle olmuş. Cahide Sonku'yla olmuş...</p>
Kesme. <i>Beklenen Şarkı</i> (Cahide Sonku, 1953) filminden bir sahne.	<p><u>LEYLA</u> ...Lale Oraloğlu olmuş.</p>
Kesme. <i>Bodrum Hakimi</i> (Türkan Şoray, 1976) filminden bir sahne.	
Kesme. Leyla, bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u> Ondan sonra da tabii kadınların kendi projelerini, giderek kendi yapmak istedikleri projeleri yapımcılara önerip ya da para bulup...</p>
Kesme. Leyla, göğüs plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u> ...filmlerini yapmaya başladıkları bir döneme giriyoruz...</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Kesme. <i>Bir Kırık Bebek</i> (Nisan Akman, 1987) filminden bir sahne girer.</p>	<p><u>LEYLA</u> ...Nisan Yönder, Mahinur Ergun, Gülsüm Karamustafa ile Firuzan bir film yaptılar. Işıl Özgentürk bir film yaptı.</p>
<p>Arka arkaya <i>Seni Seviyorum Rosa</i> (Işıl Özgentürk, 1987) ve <i>Yarım Kalan Mucize</i> (Biket İlhan, 2012) filmlerinden birer sahne.</p>	<p><u>LEYLA</u> Şey yani, biraz sancılı hepsi, ama bazıları da daha rahat şartlarda... Biket İlhan sonra çok film yaptı.</p>
<p>Kesme. Biket, göğüs plan.</p>	<p><u>BİKET</u> Şimdi seksenli yılların başı. Ben o dönemde sinemayı tanıdım. O dönemde tabii ki kadınlar vardı sinemada ama sanat yönetmeni olarak, asistan olarak, yani o konumlarda çalışıyorlardı ve çok az da kadın yönetmen vardı. Yani yok değildi elbette. Ama sanıyorum o dönemlerde 10-15 tane kadın yönetmen vardı.</p>
<p>Kesme. Biket, genel plan.</p>	<p><u>BİKET</u> Bunların içinde bir tek Bilge Olgaç...</p>
<p>Konuşma sürerken araya Bilge Olgaç'ın <i>Umut Hep Vardı</i> (1991) filminin kamera arkası set fotoğrafları girer.</p>	<p><u>BİKET</u> ...sektörde hayli fazla film çekmiş bir yönetmen. Mesela 2000li yılların başına kadar aşağı yukarı 6000 bin tane Türk filmi çekilmiş. Bu 6000 Türk filminin...</p>
<p>Kesme. Biket, göğüs plan.</p>	<p><u>BİKET</u> ...90 küsürü kadınlara ait, kadın yönetmenlere ait ve bu 90 küsüründe 37 tanesi Bilge Olgaç'ın filmi.</p>
<p>Kesme. Leyla, göğüs plan.</p>	<p><u>LEYLA</u> Bilge Olgaç'ta...</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Leyla'nın konuşması devam ederken Bilge Olgaç'ın fotoğrafları tekrar girer.</p> <p>Kesme. Canan, göğüs plan.</p>	<p><u>LEYLA</u> ...tabi ki o dönemde bir kadın olarak var olmak da çok kolay değil. Bir eleştiri, yani erkek gibiydi, şimdi kadın olarak var oldun yöneticisin, yönetmensin, zaman zaman erkek gibi davranma.</p> <p><u>CANAN</u> O şartlarda bunun ne demek olduğu, ne anlama geldiğini çok çok iyi anlıyorum gerçekten. Yani o kadar zor şartlarda erkek hegemonyasında bir iş yapıyorsunuz ki, 'bak ben de sizden biriyim, vallahi sizden biriyim, başka tür bir şey değilim' in altını çizmek, buna inandırmak çabasıdır.</p>
<p>Kesme. <i>İpekçe</i> (Bilge Olgaç, 1987) filminden bir sahne.</p> <p>Kesme. Handan, geniş plan.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u> Bu Yeşilçam'ın kuşağıydı. Biz ilk başladığımızda Yeşilçam geleneği hakimdi. Ama şimdiki görüntü yönetmenleri, asistanlar hakikaten okullardan geliyorlar ve zaten hani dil de değişti anlatabiliyor muyum? Ve yönetmenler de dili değiştirdi, son dönem genç yönetmenler de dili çok değiştirdi. Ha, giderek o set kültürü de, ilişkiler de değişiyor ve hani kadın olma halinin getirdiği şey durumlar...</p>
<p>Kesme. Kamera arkası görüntüsüne kesilir.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u> ...karikatür ve negatif durumlar da giderek azalıyor tabi.</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Kamera arkası görüntü devam eder. Erkek görüntü yönetmeni ile belgeselin kadın yönetmenleri arasında ki set ilişkisini gösterir.</p> <p>Kesme. Biket, bel plan.</p> <p>Kesme. Biket, genel plan.</p>	<p><u>G.YÖNETMENİ</u> İsterseniz buraya hani... Şu fon güzel mi? Güzel değil mi kitaplar, dikkat çekici değil...</p> <p><u>SU</u> Yok.</p> <p><u>G.YÖNETMENİ</u> Tamam.</p> <p><u>SU</u> Daha kişisel sorularda bu çerçeve daha güzel.Yani işte biz...</p> <p><u>G.YÖNETMENİ</u> Tamam. Başta şöyle yaparım o zaman. Şimdi, pardon... Başta şöyle yaparım. Çok özel şeylere girdiğinizde de, hani kişisel şeylere girdiğinizde şöyle ifadeleri alırım. Sağa kayarım, sola kayarım istediğiniz gibi. Başta böyle başlayabilirim.</p> <p><u>BIKET</u> Yani ben, bana nasıl davranıldı diye düşünüyorum, çok öyle bir tuhaf davranışla karşılaşmadım hani 'sen kadınsın' falan, 'ne bilirsin' gibi...</p> <p><u>BIKET</u> Ama ben böyle şeyleri duymaktan da uzak durdum zaten yani o anlamda bir mesafe koydum. Çok büyük bir zorlukla karşılaştığımı söyleyemem. Diğer yönetmenler adına konuşmıyım ama onlar için de bu geçerli bence.</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Biket, göğüs plan.	<p><u>BIKET</u>  ...Onların da böyle bir yani kadın oldukları için çok özel bir zorlukla karşılaştıklarını sanmıyorum. Zaten sinema yapmak çok zor. Sinema yani para bulmak bu iş için çok zor. Neredeyse film yapma çabamızın dışında daha büyük bir çabayı da finans kaynakları için harcıyoruz.</p>
Kesme. Canan, genel plan.	<p><u>SU</u>  Mali sıkıntılardan bahsedince özellikle de galiba bir kadın film çekmek istediğinde biraz daha zor gibi finansal kaynak bulmak.</p>
Kesme. Canan, göğüs plan.	<p><u>CANAN</u>  Zor evet. Evet zor, yani bunla ilgili bir anekdot anlatabilirim. Bir film projem vardı, senaryosunu yazdım, yapımcı arıyorum. O zamanlar rahmetli Kadri Yurdatap'a gittim. Projeye de baktı etti, okudu falan. Ve bana şöyle bir laf etmişti, bugün gibi aklımda. Hem çok şaşırmıştım, hem üzülmişim, sonra da gülmüştüm. Şöyle dedi bana: 'canım niye bunların peşine düşüp bu kadar bu paraları bulup bu işleri yapmaya çalışıyorsun ki? Evinin hanımı olsana' demişti bana. Çok şaşırmıştım, yani gerçekten. Sonuç olarak bu cümleyi kuran hani Yeşilçam'ın çok eski, önemli bir yapımcısı yani Kadri Yurdatap.</p>
Kesme. Leyla bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  Hakkari'de bir mevsimde çok izole bir köyde çalışıyorduk ve ben birazcıkta karlarda çalıştığımız için böyle...</p>
Kesme. Leyla genel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  ...kar botları, kar pantolonu, üstümde kat kat şeyler, başımda şey sargı, eşarplar şallar falan sarılı...</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Leyla, bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  ...ve ben birinci yönetmen yardımcısı olduğum için herkesi ben şey veriyorum, iş bölümünü ben yapıyorum. Herkese işte şuraya gidilecek, buraya gidilecek falan filan. Şimdi böyle bakıyorlardı bir kadının oradaki insanlara, setteki bütün erkeklere hakim olması ve her şeyi onun yönetiyor olması birazcık onların garibine gitti. Benim bir kadın olduğumu anlamadılar yani. Belki bir erkeğim diye sesi kadın sesine benzeyen bir erkeğim diye düşündüler falan. Hatta kadınlarla da şey herhalde konuştular ki kadınlarla da akşamları falan geliyorlardı bizi ziyarete, onların evlerinde kalıyorduk. Yani böyle göğsünüze dokunarak, göğsü var mı, kadın mı diye cinsiyetimi kontrol ettiklerini hatırlıyorum ben.</p>
Kesme. Canan göğüs plan.	<p><u>CANAN</u>  Set kızı diye bir tabir vardır. Yani, postal, şey işte kargo pantolonlar, bol cepli yelekler, işte kalın kazaklar, yani kadınsal kimlikten uzaklaşılın, işte mutlaka illa ki makyaj yapılmayan, falan böyle bir set kadını, modeli, tipi vardır. Ama bu son yıllarda biraz biraz değişmeye başladı.</p>
Kesme. Zeynep Dadak ve Merve Kayan genel plan. (Merve diz üstü bilgisayar üzerinden kaydedilir.)	<p><u>MERVE</u>  İşte zamanında...</p>
Kesme. <i>Mavi Dalga</i> (2013) filminin kamera arkası set fotoğrafları.	<p><u>MERVE</u>  ...küçük bi televizyon çekimindeydim. Ve üstümde bi çanta taşıyorum. Çünkü sokakta çekim yapıyoruz ve ışıkçıya yardım etmeye çalışıyorum. Bir noktada görüntü yönetmeni...</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Zeynep, göğüs plan.	<p><u>MERVE</u>  ...gerçekten çok sabrı taşmış bir şekilde bana geldi ve çıkar artık şu çantayı dedi. Çünkü işte hem ışıkla mücadele ediyorsun hem de çantayla mücadele ediyorsun...</p>
Kesme. Zeynep, genel plan.	<p><u>MERVE</u>  ...Ya o an tabii ki çıkardım, çünkü gerçekten evet belki de işim daha kolay olacak falan, ama düşündüğünüzde, yani kadının çantasıyla sette olması zaten birçok insanı rahatsız eden bir şey. Yani o metaforik anlamda da belki gerçekten 'bagagge' yani... Ağırlığımızla birlikte zaten oraya geliyoruz ve ondan kurtulmamız bekleniyor.</p>
Kesme. Leyla, bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  Yani kadınlar yönetici konuma geldiği zaman erkekler gibi davranıyorsa o zaman çok anlamlı olmuyor. Gerçekten topluma çok fazla bir şey katmıyor. Kadınlar kendi cinslerinin özelliklerini...</p>
Kesme. Leyla, göğüs plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  ...ifade etmeye başladıkları zaman...</p>
Kesme. Leyla, bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  ...onların varlıklarının bir anlamı ortaya çıkıyor. Bu farkı da reddetmemek gerekiyor. Bu farkın güzelliklerini ortaya koymak gerekiyor...</p>
Kesme. Leyla, göğüs plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  ...Ama sanıyorum bugün, bu konuda daha farklı bir noktaya...</p>
Kesme. Leyla, bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>  ...ulaşılıyor insanlar ve Türkiye'de de gittikçe artan, dünyada da gittikçe artan genç kadın yönetmenler oluyor. Ben aslında çok merak ediyorum genç nesil bu konuda ne düşünüyor.</p>



VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Zeynep, genel plan.	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u>            Bir sürü kadın yönetmen kadın kimliğine hapsolmaktan çok rahatsız oluyor ve korkuyor, endişe ediyor. Bu da çok anlaşılabilir bir şey. Tabii ki yani hiçbirimiz öncelikle kadın yönetmen olarak var olmadık, yönetmeniz. Ama...</p>
Kesme. Zeynep, göğüs plan.	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u>            ...hani kadın olmamızın bunun içerisinde nasıl bir, hani, yeri olduğunu konuşmazsak işte, kadın yönetmen olmak maalesef işte 'dantel gibi film yapmak', 'kadın duyarlılığı', 'çok duygulu, çok hisli bir film' falan gibi, böyle acayip yine klişe, stereotip laflara hapsedilmiş oluyor yani.</p>
Kesme. Leyla, bel plan.	<p><u>LEYLA</u>            Bir kadın yönetmenin kadın sorunlarıyla ilgili bakış açısı çok farklı idi, hele o zamanlarda. Atıf Yılmaz da bizim dönemimizde kadın sorunuyla ilgili... çünkü feminizmin yeni başladığı yıllardı 80li yıllardan sonra kadına bakış hem dünyada hem Türkiye'de değişmeye başladı. Ve işte kadınlar üzerine en çok yapan, film yapan yönetmenlerden birisi bir erkek yönetmen diye hatta böyle bunun çok tartışması yapıldı. Yani kadın sorunlarına bir erkek yönetmen kadınlardan daha fazla mı ilgi duyuyor? Ama o dönemde çok fazla kadın yönetmen yoktu zaten.</p>
Kesme. Biket göğüs plan.	<p><u>BİKET</u>            Kadın filmi çeken erkek yönetmenler de var. Ama onların bile dikkat ederseniz hiçbiri, işte o Türkan Şoraylar'ın, Hülya Koçyiğitler'in, Fatma Girikler'in, daha nicelerinin oynadığı filmlerde ağırlıklı olarak bu kadınlar var. Ama hiçbir filmde o kadının gözüyle bakılmamış o hikayeye, meseleye. Fark burada bence.</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Zeynep, göğüs plan.	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u> Nasıl karakterler anlatmak istiyoruz, nasıl karakterler temsil etmek istiyoruz, hani, sorusunu düşünerek film yapamayız.</p>
Kesme. Zeynep, genel plan.	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u> Yani gerçekten nerdeyse super kahraman yaratmanızı bekliyorlar sizden. Eğer kendinizi işte feminist olarak tanımlıyorsanız...</p>
Kesme. Zeynep, göğüs plan.	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u> ...'kadın yönetmen' denmesinden rahatsız olmuyorsanız. Halbuki, mesela bizim filmde yapmaya çalıştığımız şey sıradan, hiçbir özelliği olmayan bir kızın konuşmasıydı...</p>
Kesme. <i>Mavi Dalga</i> (Zeynep Dadak & Merve Kayan, 2013) filminden bir sahne.	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u> ...yani, kendine bir söz alanı bulabilmesiydi bu film aracılığıyla.</p>
Kesme. Canan, göğüs plan.	<p><u>CANAN</u> Şimdi ben 'Alın Yazım' diye bir günlük dizi...</p>
Kesme. Canan'ın çeşitli dizi setlerinde çekilmiş kamera arkası set fotoğrafları.	<p><u>CANAN</u> ...yapıyorum, çekiyorum. Günlük bir dizi olduğu için yetişmesi için ancak...</p>
Kesme. Canan, göğüs plan.	<p><u>CANAN</u> ...iki ekibin çekmesi gerekiyor. Bu iki ekibin de...</p>
Kesme. Canan kamera arkası set fotoğrafları.	<p><u>CANAN</u> ...iki ayrı ekibin programını yapan ortak bir tane bir reji koordinatörümüz var. Mesela bu işi yapan arkadaşımızla şöyle bir konuşma geçti aramda.</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Canan göğüs plan.	<p><u>CANAN</u> Dedim ki, birinci ekip, diğer ekibe arka arkaya çok ağır işler koydun, bu dikkatimi çekiyor, neden böyle bir şey yaptın...</p>
Kesme. Canan kamera arkası set fotoğrafları.	<p><u>CANAN</u> ...dedim. Ağzından insiyaki olarak şöyle bir laf çıktı, çok dedi kavgalı, koşturmalı sahneleri dedi, hani erkek diye dedi, birinci ekibe dedi koymayı düşündüm, dedi.</p>
Kesme. Canan, göğüs plan.	<p><u>CANAN</u> ...Ah, tam da bunu kastediyorum işte dedim Petek'cim. Tam olarak bunun farkında olduğum için sana bu cümleyi, bu soruyu yönelttim. Niye böyle yapıyorsun? Yönetmenin kadını erkeği olmaz ki, yönetmen kavga dövüş çeker, yangın çeker, uçurum çeker, her şeyi çeker. Bunu yapamıyorsa zaten evinde dolma sarmalıdır, yani.</p>
Kesme. <i>Alın Yazım</i> (2014-) dizisinden bir sahne.	
Kesme. Çapraz geçiş. Handan, genel plan.	<p><u>HANDAN</u> Bilgi çok kadına ait bir şey değil henüz. Hani belgesel bilgi ya, bilgilendirmek, gerçeği vermek. Gerçek henüz kadınların idare ettiği bir şey değil.</p>
Kesme. Handan, göğüs plan.	<p><u>HANDAN</u> Çünkü bir erkek dili üzerinden kurulmuş bütün malzemelerimiz onların üzerinden kurulmuş. Çok feminist bir noktaya gitti ama... En yukarı başlara çıkıp bakarsak, bir kere malzemen oradan. Sonra geliyorsun gerçeğe, pratiğe geliyorsun. Pratik de o gelenek üzerinden kodlar kurulmuş. Sonra...</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Kesme. Handan, genel plan.</p> <p>Kesme. <i>Heremin Büyüsü</i> (Handan Öztürk, 1998) belgeseli.</p> <p>Kararma.</p> <p>Kesme. Zeynep, göğüs plan.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u>  ...sende de o kodlar var, esasında. Yani sen de böyle gökten bir şey, tanrıça olarak, her şeyi değiştiren bir Tanrıça olarak inmiyorsun. Sen de bu toplum içerisinde gelmişsin, sende de o kodlar var. Ben şimdi belgesellerime baktığımda, geçmiş belgesellerime baktığımda, bu üç arızanın çok net bir biçimde onlara geçtiğini görüyorum ve içim yanıyor, anlatabiliyor muyum?</p>
<p>Kesme. Zeynep, aktüel genel plan. Görüntüde çekim yapmakta olan ikinci kamera ve Su da vardır.</p>	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u>  Bizim en çok duyduğumuz şeylerden biri setin ikinci gününde 'ne yapmak istediklerini çok iyi biliyorlar' lafıydı ve biz buna çok gülüyorduk yani. Yani, bilmem kaç senedir bu film üzerine çalışıyorum, 'ne yapmak istediğini iyi biliyor'u.. mesela işte elinde...</p> <p><u>ZEYNEP</u>  ...vizörüyle mekan bakmaya açı bakmaya gelen yönetmen yani 'bugün çok şey bir kafadayım, bugün böyle yapmayalım da şöyle yapalım' dese mesela...</p>
<p>Kesme. Zeynep, göğüs plan.</p>	<p><u>ZEYNEP</u>  ...genç bir erkek yönetmen, büyük ihtimalle 'vay be' işte 'deha, aklına parlak fikirler geldi bugün denemek istiyor' olacak. Halbuki mesela bir, iki kadın, ya da tek başına bir kadın gelip bunu yaptığında, 'ya bu aslında film çekmekten falan büyük ihtimalle anlamıyor da' işte, hani, 'buraya gelmiş açı arıyor' diye düşünecekler aynı durumda. Yani dolayısıyla biz de hani gerçekten açılarımızı falan daha önceden biliyorduk, ki bilmek zorunda hiç değiliz.</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Kesme. Belgeselin ilk çekim gününden kamera arkası bir görüntü. Yönetmenlerin 'açı arama' görüntüsü.</p>	
<p>Kesme. Canan, göğüs plan.</p>	<p><u>CANAN</u> Bazen şöyle şeyler oluyor mesela: bir mekanda çalışmak istiyorum ben. Normal olarak mekanı çekime uygun hale getirmek, kiralamak prodüksiyonun işidir. Prodüksiyon elemanları bu arada genellikle erkektir, %95 oranda bir ağırlıklı, ezici bir ağırlıklı, işte giderler ve bir şekilde 'olmaz' diye, 'olmuyor' diye gelirler. Ama işte ben giderim, bir şeker ne yapmak istediğimi anlatırım falan ve o mekanı alır gelirim. Böyle bu tür küçük hoşlukları var mıdır, vardır belki; ama bu çok da kadın olmamla mı ilgilidir bilmiyorum, sanki erkek de olsam... Biraz üslupla ilgili olduğunu düşünüyorum ben.</p>
<p>Kesme. Handan, genel plan.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u> Mesela sponsor üzerinde etkili olabilir diye düşünüyorsun. Şöyle oluyor, evet seni çok sık karşılıyor...</p>
<p>Kesme. Kamera arkası, Su ve Merve dinleme detayı.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u> ...çok kibar karşılıyor. Ama bence kadın olduğun için bir...</p>
<p>Kesme. Handan, yakın plan.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u> ...şey var yani, hani. Çünkü kadınlar bu alanda da yeni yeni var olmaya başladılar ve ciddi bir...</p>
<p>Kesme. Handan, genel plan.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u> ...savaş ve bilinç oluşturuyorlar, anlatabiliyor muyum? Ve dönüşüm tam sağlanmamış. Yani sponsor da seni çok...</p>
<p>Kesme. Handan, yakın plan.</p>	<p><u>HANDAN</u> ...önemsemiyor...</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Handan, genel plan.	<p><u>HANDAN</u> ...Ekibin de belki bilinçaltının çok derinliklerinde bir yerde bir yanlış yaparsan şaşırıyor.</p>
Kesme. Canan, göğüs plan.	<p><u>CANAN</u> Bu öyle tuhaf bir, öyle tuhaf bir şey duygusu ki, 'ben yaptım' duygusu ki. Galiba bu kadar böyle özelliği olan bir işi yaptığın için etrafında bir büyü var, bir hare var. Ve bu insanlarda dikkat çekiyor. Yani, 'a işte o kadın yönetmen, çünkü o erki o kullanıyor.' Çünkü bu gerçekten güçlü bir erk. Gerçekten böyle.</p>
Kararma.	
Görüntü tekrar açılır. Kamera arkası çekimleri.	<p><u>G.YÖNETMENİ</u> Çok memnun oldum iyi günler.</p>
	<p><u>HANDAN</u> Bende. Hadi kolay gelsin.</p>
	<p><u>KAMERAMAN</u> Sağolun, iyi günler.</p>
	<p><u>SU</u> Tamam mısınız?</p>
	<p><u>MERVE</u> Tamamım</p>
Kesme. Kamera arkası görüntüleri devam eder.	<p><u>MERVE</u> Beklediklerimin çoğunu şey yapamadık. Hani, kafamda kurduğum şeyleri. Hani şeyde falan, o çıplaklıkta falan daha çok şey bekliyordum. 'Hayır hiç olmadı' falan dedi ya...</p> <p><u>SU</u> Önü çok kesildi bir sürü şeyin. Ya ısrarla anekdot istiyoruz anladın mı. İsrarla böyle bir hikaye, biz kafamızda...</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
Kesme. Su'nun amorsundan Zeynep.	<u>SU</u> ...çünkü canlandırmışız 'aa şöyle bişey anlatsa ne güzel olur' falan. İstiyoruz ki o çıksın ağzından.
Siyaha düşme.	<u>DADAK</u> Evet...
Siyah fon üzerinde filmin ismi belirir: KAMERALI KADINLAR.	<u>DADAK</u> O zaman kapatın da anlatayım. (Gülüşmeler)
Jenerik başlar. Donuk kare yönetmen isimleri.	
Siyaha fon.	
Siyahıtan açılma. Leyla, göğüs plan.	<u>LEYLA</u> Birşey anlatacağım ama bunu kaydetme.
Su görüntüye girer. Kameraya dönerek konuşur.	<u>SU</u> Tamam, çıkınız.
Jenerik.	

## **Introduction**

The short non-fiction film *Women with a Movie Camera* questions the position of women filmmakers within Turkey's contemporary film industry. My co-director Merve Bozcu and I have worked in various film and television projects, and our experience of participating on set caused us to reflect closely on an often bypassed issue in critical analyses of film industry in Turkey: the gender polarization in the workplace. The project's starting point was the need to record personal testimonies of Turkey's women directors, with regards to working in an industry that is predominantly male. What does it mean to be a woman director in Turkey? How do women work as creators of film, in a society where cultural codes of patriarchy manifest in every aspect of daily life? What are some of the instances where both women and men, often unknowingly, reinforce the subordination of women in daily encounters and interactions? What does it mean to the upcoming generation of women filmmakers to be a woman under current industry conditions? These were the main questions that initiated the idea of *Women with a Movie Camera*.

The study of "women's cinema" in academia is a highly debated issue. The existing literature on films directed by women tends to reduce the subject of female workers' existence in film industry down to analyses of their works, by focusing solely on issues within narratives and characters, particularly the depiction of female subjectivity. Feminist film scholars have a tendency to talk about women directors solely in relation to the extent in which they rewrite the silent and powerless female



image and offer a female character's point of view. Moreover, women directors have been discussed significantly through paradigms such as "women's vision," "female aesthetics" and "female sensibility," bringing into question the discussions of "essentialism."

By recognizing the impracticality of determining whether such a notion as "female aesthetics" does exist in cinema, *Women with a Movie Camera* instead focuses on the material conditions of production, in which gender inequality affects women's roles as directors. Through personal testimonies of Leyla Özalp, Biket İlhan, Handan Öztürk, Canan Evcimen, Zeynep Dadak and Merve Kayan, this project investigates specific instances where women directors have been treated as "females," that is, as women before directors; and more importantly, it explores the different ways in which these directors reflect on their own experiences in front of the camera. Thus, our concern is not to categorize these filmmakers by analysing the subject matters, genres or particular sensibilities in their works, but to observe their relationship with the industry as female workers.

The project that we undertake in making *Women with a Movie Camera* can be classified under the recently developed academic field of Production Studies. Our interest is in the off-screen cultural production, the shared language and understanding that causes female practitioners to continuously shape and re-shape their identities in line with the present economy of power between genders.

Therefore, rather than relying on theoretical debates alone, this project privileges the lived experience; the voices of the inside perspective. In "Bringing the Social Back In: Studies of Production Cultures and Social Theory," Vicky Mayer explains the extent to which Production Studies can be beneficial for a broader understanding of the current economy of workers in the media industry:

“As a field of study, ‘production studies’ captures for me the ways that power operates locally through media production to reproduce social hierarchies and inequalities at the level of daily interactions. Production studies, in other words, ‘ground’ social theories by showing us how specific production sites, actors, or activities tell us larger lessons about workers, their practices, and the role of their labors in relation to politics, economics, and culture” (2009: 15).

Behind-the-scenes of any film production can also be viewed as a site where cultural codes and stereotypes are exerted and different identities are performed. When studied closely, it can even be regarded as reflection of the tensions represented in many fiction and non-fiction texts. This project, in this respect, attempts to demonstrate that non-fiction texts can also be analyzed almost in the same skeptical approach as fictional representations; that there is always a degree of control in the subject’s self-representation.

In the first part of this thesis, I will provide an overview of multiple meanings of “women’s cinema” and the problems that such terminology imposes on women filmmakers in the world and in Turkey. Subsequently, I will discuss the *Women with a Movie Camera* project, the subjects that we chose for the film and the key questions that structured the interviews. In the final part, I intend to describe outcomes of the directors’ personal testimonies, the inevitable dimension of the subjects’ control over their self-representations, and the ways in which we tried to reflect on this in film form.

### **“Women’s Cinema:” Definitions of the Term and Women Directors in the World**

The concept of “women’s cinema” or “women’s film” is not easy to define, as it can imply different meanings depending on the context in which it is being used. Most of the scholarship dedicated to “women’s cinema” presents similar explanations for the term. For instance, according to Alison Butler, “women’s cinema” refers to “films that might be made by, addressed to, or concerned with women, or all three” (2002: 2). Such

a definition is problematic in and of itself, for it consists of a vast collection of works from the introduction of cinema in late 1800s to date, under an umbrella term that characterizes films by the gender of either the filmmaker, protagonist, or target audience. Due to the multiple meanings designated by “women’s cinema,” there is an immediate assumption that directors who are female are (or should be) concerned with making films that address women’s struggles and focus on the so-called “positive” images.

Within the existing paradigms of film criticism, women filmmakers are being burdened with such anticipations based on the content of their films. This is not to demean filmmakers who consciously focus on raising awareness about women’s issues through their cinematic work, rather, it is to defend their right not to be expected to make such films. Women, alongside men, have been working in the industry since the earliest days of the film medium, though in lesser in numbers, because of the lack of work and education opportunities. Films made by women appear as early as the invention of the Cinematographe. However, it was only in the wake of the feminist movements of late 1960s and 70s that the concept of “women’s cinema” began receiving the scholarly attention it deserved. Still, the main preoccupation of feminist criticism has been the representation of women. It goes without saying that women have had more visibility in the filmmaking industry as actresses than as filmmakers. They have been objectified and stereotyped in countless mainstream representations that continue to cater to the pleasure of male viewers. With the arrival of Feminist Film Theory in the 1970s, along with the renewed interest in areas of study such as Women’s Studies, Semiotics, and Psychoanalysis, prominent theorists like Laura Mulvey (1975) and Claire Johnston (1973) argued for the need to question images that nurture the male gaze. In 1974, Molly Haskell published *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in*

*the Movies*, which was one of the earliest books discussing women's representations in Hollywood cinema.

In Turkey, "women's cinema" does not have a long history as a scholarly topic. Women started directing films in Turkey in the 1950s, and in the recent decades, many women have established themselves as acclaimed directors and quite a few of them have become known internationally. The most comprehensive study and one of the very few books that exists on women directors of Turkey is *Sinemanın Dişil Yüzü*, written by Ruken Öztürk. In her book, Öztürk covers women directors between 1951-2002. *Sinemanın Dişil Yüzü* is critical important for its inclusiveness and its unique efforts to provide one-on-one interviews with the filmmakers. However, Öztürk's questions concentrate mainly on the content of the films, and the conditions of production and daily encounters of inequality, which I believe should be the main focus of any study about women industry workers, is completely ignored. Certainly, a discussion of the positive/negative female images and the cinematic language in these films can contribute significantly to understanding the ever-imposed distinction between male directors and female directors. Yet, while any medium that allows women to speak up for themselves is valuable, I believe it is equally important to urge people to think about the workplace, and to point out the practical examples of working as a woman in a patriarchal society.

### ***Women with a Movie Camera Project: A Non-Fiction Film as a Critical Industrial Practice***

The first time Merve and I thought about interviewing women filmmakers, we had not immediately thought of making a film. The idea was to publish the interviews, in a similar way to what Öztürk did with her book. But we realized that a

topic such as this would be much more powerful if explored in documentary form. At the same time, it would provide the perfect subject matter for our first film as directors; it would give us a chance to talk to women who have been there, and to learn about how they have dealt with the issues in filmmaking that we were only beginning to encounter.

The sort of production study I am framing here foregrounds the directors' discussions of the material conditions of filmmaking, and the ways in which these six women perceive their relationship to the medium and their status in the industry. Given the difficulties imposed by multiple meanings of the term "women's cinema," it is essential to point out that in this study the term is used to refer to directors who are female, regardless of whether their works delve into women's issues or not. Our project is based on the gendering of the workplace and women's exposure to certain behaviors. In this regard, discriminating based on the kinds of works that women create is irrelevant for our inquiry.

The hegemony of heterosexual male culture is so deeply embedded in society that both men and women reinforce it, albeit unconsciously and perhaps unwittingly, by subordinating one another during the various stages of filmmaking. However, being aware of such deep internalization requires critical thinking about the subject, more observation of the subtle errors, or micro-aggressions of language and behavior. What we are trying to achieve with this film is to make our subjects, ourselves, and ultimately the viewers more conscious of these subtle errors of language and behavior in the workplace. Until the moment when women directors are referred to as "directors" alone, the question remains: Is it ever possible to strip away the "woman" identity and merely be regarded as a filmmaker?

### 3.1 Choice of Subjects

*Women with a Movie Camera* features Zeynep Dadak, Canan Evcimen, Biket İlhan, Merve Kayan, Leyla Özalp and Handan Öztürk, each of whom work in a different field of filmmaking. We made our selection of subjects based on diversity in the directors' field of work and age/generation. In addition, we tried to include directors who were not featured in Öztürk's book. İlhan and Evcimen are the only two directors who were interviewed in Öztürk's study.

Unlike the rest of our subjects, Leyla Özalp is known more as a producer than as a director. She directed two fiction films and several documentaries in the 1990s and was first involved in the cinema industry as an assistant director in the late seventies. She is one of the few directors who witnessed the first wave of women directors in Turkey, and even had the opportunity to assist Türkan Şoray, a well known actor and also director, when she directed her second film *Yılanı Öldürseler* (*To Crush the Serpent*, 1991). In our project, we wanted to include someone who could offer a comprehensive perspective on the history of women directors of Turkey, and as a witness to many directors' debuts, Özalp was just the person to have in this film. Her vast experience of working in Yeşilçam, a cinematic style and period that dominated the Turkish film industry between 1950 and 1970 (Dönmez-Colin 2014), was crucial for *Women with a Movie Camera* project, particularly for answering questions about the struggles of pioneering women directors trying to make room for themselves in the industry.

Biket İlhan started working in the industry in 1981 as an assistant for director Feyzi Tuna. She then began directing films herself and is still active in the industry both as a director and producer. Being a fiction film director with over twenty years of experience, İlhan is an essential component of our film because she allows us to

compare the ideas of a more experienced woman director with those who have recently entered the industry.

Handan Öztürk is a director who has devoted most of her career to non-fiction. Ozturk's interest in making documentaries about women, such as *Haremin Büyüsü* (1998), *Anadolu'nun Ana Tanrıçaları* (2000) and *Üç Kadın, Elli Yıl ve Avrupa* (2009), was the key reason to include her in this project. In recent years, she has turned towards narrative fiction, and in 2009 directed *Benim ve Roz'un Sonbaharı* (*Me and Roz*).

Having directed various documentaries throughout the 1990s, two feature films and one film for television, Canan Evcimen now works primarily as a television series director. The difference of opinion and diversity between subjects is one of the core attributes of this project. Given the fact that many women industry participants, (directors, art directors, screenwriters and producers,) work in television series, and that some of the most popular series today are directed by women, Evcimen's opinions as a TV director contribute greatly to the multiplicity of women's voices in this film. Evcimen was also named the youngest woman director in Turkey, when she made her first feature film *Hoşçakal Umut* (*Goodbye Hope*, 1993) at the age of 30.

Zeynep Dadak and Merve Kayan belong to the recent generation of filmmakers and are arguably more self-conscious than all the other directors in the project about subtle forms of gender-based oppression experienced on and off the set. We interviewed Dadak and Kayan at the same time, which allowed them to speak about their shared experiences, having worked as co-directors.

### 3.2 Choice of Questions

Prior to the shooting, we had decided on a few questions that were based on issues that we felt were essential. The first question was about the criticism directed particularly towards the first women directors in Turkey, for being excessively “man-like” on the set. Secondly, we asked directors to offer their opinions on the “women director” labelling in the media. Part of this question also involved the common assumption that women directors should focus on female characters and issues. Our final question was whether they had encountered any sort of direct or indirect sexism during the various stages of making a film.

How does a woman director establish her personal style of working, in terms of controlling a large crew or simply interacting with another member of her crew? In other words, how much are they able to refrain from performing a kind of behavior that is often associated with the male gender, without risking losing the respect of the crew? The interviews began with a discussion of Bilge Olgaç, because we felt that being the pioneering woman director in Turkey, her name had to be mentioned. Among the industry circles I have been hearing a widely recognised rumour about Olgaç, that she was extremely “man-like” on set and that she removed herself from all behaviors and practices that are associated with femininity, according to societal norms. Ayşe Durukan, producer, and a close friend of Olgaç’s writes:

“Indeed, being female in cinema was harder than being male. In Yeşilçam, maybe not now but then, education was based on ‘apprenticeship’ rather than professional training. Countering existing societal values and being able to survive as a director in this male dominated industry was possible only by effacing femininity. And this is partially where Bilge’s authority came from.” (2004)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Gerçekten de sinemada kadın olmak, erkek olmaktan daha zordu. Bugün olmasa bile dün, mesleki eğitimleri bir kenara, genel eğitimleri 'çıraklık' geleneğine dayalı Yeşilçam'da, toplumun değer



Leyla Özalp, Biket İlhan and Canan Evcimen all brought her up in their answers to our first question, to emphasizing her success in building a vast filmography between 1965 and 1994. Their answers demonstrated, that they sympathize with Olgaç's struggle to become accepted in the Yeşilçam film industry, which was a boys' club. Possibly because Olgaç bears the record of directing the largest number of films as a woman in Turkey, she is regarded as a legendary figure amongst women directors. There is a certain myth in society, that being a good director means performing toughness on set in order to maintain a strong collaboration among crew members. Both women and men suffer from this association and often feel forced to perform a set of behaviors that are considered "man-like" according to societal norms. This is one of the essential issues in our film industry, and does not get enough attention. Olgaç's success in having built such an extensive filmography at a time when there were only a few female filmmakers around, could have influenced her choice to act in ways that are commonly understood as "manly." As Handan Öztürk points out during the interview, this behavior was proper to the Yeşilçam era. Back in those years, a different kind of language and behaviour dominated the sets, which were often described through military metaphors. As Durukan explains in the above quote, work positions among set employees were quite similar to the military ranking system. Consequently, attitudes of the director during those years required a militaristic rigidity, which is culturally attributed to males.

The interviews demonstrated that this aggressive language may have softened through the decades, but the way that women dress during shoots today still reflects a particular set of "do's" and "don't's." On one hand, the very creation of the "set girl" as a caricature points out to the incongruity of a female acting like a "man." On the

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yargılarını kırmak, erkek egemenliğindeki bu sektörde yönetmen olarak var olabilmek, kadınlığın rafa kalkmasıyla olasıydı ki, Bilge'nin otoritesi biraz da buradan geliyordu." (My translation)

other hand, it paradoxically condescends women by using the term “girl” instead of “woman.”

Directors responded to these questions in varying manners, which made us realize that there is much less homogeneity among female directors than we had imagined, especially in terms of the way they thought about their own experiences with sexism. For example, İlhan strictly denied that she ever felt subjugated patriarchal behavior in the workplace. When we asked Evcimen the same question, at first she answered “no.” I rephrased the question a few times to encourage her to take her time to think about the question. Finally, she told us the story about her female production assistant who scheduled all of the scenes requiring more physical strength for her male co-director and gave Evcimen a much less arduous agenda. Dadak and Kayan on the other hand, were full of such anecdotes and immediately told us about numerous cases they felt like they were exposed to gender inequality.

Clearly some women are more conscious of the gendering of the work than others. However, it was not easy for most of them to remember the sort of instances that we asked them to reveal. These are moments that are internalized deeply, and often times, women are not aware that they have been so frequently exposed to acts of inequality; their realization comes when they are asked these questions. In my experience of interviewing women filmmakers, most of the time, women have to think and dig deep in their memories to bring out such experiences.

Moreover, some of the responses our subjects offered demonstrate the extent to which, as a society, whether male or female, we all reinforce the misogynist discourses. As for women who appear in this film, including myself and my co-director, we each have a more or less feminist ideology, but at times we too fail to escape this misogynist internalization. For instance, the most interesting part about

Evcimen's anecdote is that she emphasizes that she was subjected to inequality by a female co-worker who assigned her a less demanding shooting schedule than her male co-director, but concludes the story by subordinating another woman in the exact same way, using the same condescending discourse. She privileges the working woman, implying that women who do not work "sit at home and cook" because they aren't capable of work that requires strength.

### **3.3 Self-consciousness and Performance of the Subject**

According to Bill Nichols,

"the degree to which people's behaviour and personality change during the making of a film can introduce an element of fiction into the documentary process. Self-consciousness and modifications in behaviour can become a form of misrepresentation, or distortion, in one sense, but they also document the ways in which the act of filmmaking alters the reality it sets out to represent." (2001:1)

Making a non-fiction film requires consideration on the part of the filmmaker - there is always a degree of transformation in the subject's everyday behavior in the presence of a camera. When this degree of performance is not acknowledged within the film, the representation is altered. This was one of the challenges that we faced when we made the first cut of *Women with a Movie Camera*. We were so excessively focused on showing the countless stories of sexism women had to tell, that we neglected to take into account their controlled self-disclosures. We claimed to have made a self-reflexive film, but the film did not position itself clearly on the reflexive approach. It was constructed in a way that seemed as if we took all directors' testimonies as face value, without questioning their self-representation, or commenting on it within the film. In our case, there was an added difficulty in questioning the performativity of a social actor, mainly because we could relate to most of the experiences our subjects talk about in the film. But after watching the interviews again and again, we realized that rather than trying to convey the truth of these interviews, we could view the on-screen discussions as cultural productions

in their own right. Taking these discussions as face value is to contradict the very objective of this project in the first place. It is to place these women aside from the cultural production that we are making, isolate them from the cinematic apparatus, ignore its implication within the production itself and show an “essentially” female perspective on the industry’s challenges. As social actors of this film, women filmmakers are very concerned with the awareness-raising purposes of this project and may regard it as a platform where they perform their female industry worker identities. Although Merve and I identify with the ideology behind this intention, as authors, we needed to recognize that every account in the film is a coded self-representations on its own. We needed to responsibly construct the film in a way that it reflects on that forging of identity.

Media Studies scholar John Thornton Caldwell has written many critical pieces on problems of industrial reflexivity. According to Caldwell, the film and television industry today is overwhelmingly invested in behind-the-scenes production and making production conditions visible to viewers. Despite the filmmakers’ and producers’ growing interest in revealing the “inside stories” of screen production, so many of these productions end up being overly stylized entertainment pieces with hyper self-aware participants. In the end, the result does not differ much from a fictional work because it misses the point of showing behind-the-scenes. (2009:201)

Pondering further on Caldwell’s theory of self-disclosure, Merve and I started looking for ways to explore this self-consciousness in our production. We thought of two methods: the first one was that we could film the directors working on a production. This could be a very useful idea, because directors would be much less conscious of our work, and concentrate on theirs, and therefore would appear differently than they appear while being interviewed. However, currently most of the women are not working on a new project, and filming only some women would be unfair to the others. As such we decided

to go with the second option, which was to use women's films and television series to support and counter their accounts. In non-fiction film, various stages and processes of the cinematic apparatus provide agency between interviews and the image. In *Women with a Movie Camera*, editing made that negotiation. At moments where we felt controlled self-disclosures appeared, we tried to reflect on them in the editing room, by inserting fictional works by that director. At other times, these "inserts" function to support the filmmakers' words. It is left for the viewer to interpret which inserts support and which ones contradict a subject's accounts. We tried as much as possible to employ a sort of editing that reminds the viewer that this is not an unmediated account of director's behind-the-scenes encounters.

On one hand, *Women with a Movie Camera* is making an argument. We were inspired by our personal observations and struggles to find a place for ourselves in this industry. We wanted to hear the experiences of women who came before us, and learn how they regard their positions *vis-à-vis* working conditions in screen production. The interviews are employed in the film for the sake of giving women directors a voice to express themselves. Yet, the film emphasizes that the interviews are the result of a mutual creation, and the whole film itself is an exchange of interests between the subjects and the filmmaker. Non-fiction film, by definition, is a joint creation.

The title *Women with a Movie Camera* refers to the six social actors of this film. At the same time it refers to Merve and I, as filmmakers. We wished to acknowledge our position as female directors and highlight our inclusion into the group of women directors in Turkey. Rather than separating our position as documentary filmmakers who explore an unknown territory through a fly-on-the-wall camera, which many documentaries with a "realist" claim tend to do, we attempt to show the very impossibility of making a

completely “realistic,” “unbiased” representation of a segment of society that we happen to be a part of.

## **Conclusion**

The starting point of *Women with a Movie Camera* was a need to situate ourselves as new members of an industry that frequently exposes women to various forms of inequality. As our first directorial experience, this project allowed us to discover directing, a territory of filmmaking that was still unknown to us, by way of discussing it with women who had more experience. Much discussion on “women’s cinema” in academia is centered on the kinds of films that women make. Analyzing characters and determining how much they contribute to subverting the heterosexual male hegemony may be a valuable study. However, overcharging the notion of “woman director” with meanings linked to women’s issues, oppression and freedom, intimidates certain directors who prefer not to be known primarily by their gender identity. This perspective that thrusts female directors to a preconceived set of topics, genres and styles limits their artistic capabilities.

I propose *Women with a Movie Camera* as a field-based analysis of directors’ lived experience over the more text-based researches of film and media scholars who have focused on the narrative worlds of women filmmakers. Very often text-based accounts look for a “female aesthetic” and “sensibility,” which are notions that are quite ambiguous. Rather than opening up another debate on “women’s cinema,” it takes women themselves as the subject matter. Behind the scenes can also be studied as a site of cultural production, where a set of myths and stereotypes about men and women are exerted again and again. The testimonies of female directors have a lot to offer in understanding these sites where subtle forms of gender-based oppression

continue to manifests themselves. The core interest of the film is not the gender, but the gendering of the filmmakers.

The film does not intend to make generalizations about the wider group of women directors. The accounts that *Women with a Movie Camera* presents cannot possibly stand for all women filmmakers of Turkey. Rather, it presents the testimonies of six individuals as they disclose themselves, and acknowledges the unavoidable degree of self-control through inserts of fictional scenes that mimic the non-fiction accounts. Our stance on the issue of authenticity is that any filmic behind-the-scenes project, be it a “making the video” footage, the “extras” in a DVD with commentary of the director/producer/actors, or a documentary project like the one we initiated is always a *construct*.

*Women with a Movie Camera* is the shorter version of a feature length non-fiction film project that my co-director and I intend to pursue. For our feature-length documentary, we plan to take a more inclusive approach by involving different directors from various ethnic and sociocultural backgrounds, and broadening the essential questions of the short film. Today, the number of women directors has reached over fifty, and we strongly believe that so many of these women have a lot more to contribute to our project. We would like to speak to as many of these directors as possible in order to allow for more diversity of perspectives, and feature length would be a more appropriate form to undertake such an expansive inquiry.



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