

## Locarno film festival pledges to gender parity



▲ How many seats are allocated to female directors? Four of the protagonists of the documentary film 'Female Pleasure', by Swiss director Barbara Miller (middle). Keystone

The Locarno Festival in southern Switzerland has agreed to feature more films directed by women.

August 5, 2018 - 16:29

[swissinfo.ch/sm&es](https://www.swissinfo.ch/sm&es)

The Programming Pledge for Parity and Inclusion in Cinema Festivals was signed on Sunday morning, during a ceremony conducted in French, German, and Italian, and attended by all female members of the juries for the various prizes on offer at Locarno.

The pledge was created by a French group called 5050x2020 and first signed by the leaders of the Cannes Film Festival in May. Meanwhile, the Swiss Women's Audiovisual Network (SWAN) has managed to get Locarno on board.

“Locarno will be the first A-list festival after Cannes to sign the pledge, as well as the first Swiss film festival,” announced SWAN just hours before the festival kick-off screening of “Grease” at the Piazza Grande earlier this week, on Tuesday evening.

### + Last year, Locarno celebrated its 70th anniversary

By signing the pledge, the festival leaders have committed “to compiling statistics according to gender, especially those regarding the number of films submitted” and to “disclosing the list of the appointed members of selection committees and programmers to eliminate any suspicion of a lack of diversity” – noted SWAN in a press release emailed to [swissinfo.ch](https://www.swissinfo.ch) and other media outlets.

The film festivals in Cannes, Locarno and Annecy are all agreeing to commit to a schedule of “reaching parity progressively and at the earliest opportunity”.



▲ At the parity pledge signing session in Locarno on Sunday morning. [swissinfo.ch](https://www.swissinfo.ch)

Isabelle Chassot, director of the Swiss Federal Office for Culture, declared at the occasion that the federal government, as well as the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, is also committed to applying gender parity measures in all initiatives and decisions concerning grants and employment.

She quoted recent statistics showing that 50% of graduates from the Media and Arts schools in Switzerland are women, as well as 40% of film and TV producers – but women represent only 25% in post-production jobs, and 80% of government funds (municipal, cantonal and federal) go to projects led by men.

Directly after the signing ceremony, and within the program of Locarno's Semaine de la Critique, the film *#Female Pleasures*, by Swiss director Barbara Miller, had its world premiere.

When asked at the Locarno press conference if there would be any films in the program that could cause a scandal, the festival director Carlo Chatrian answered that it would definitely be this one.

The German-Swiss documentary is essentially about the oppression of female sexuality by religion – Judaism, Islam, Catholicism and Hinduism – and by modern, highly misogynistic societies.

*#Female Pleasures* is scheduled to run in Swiss cinemas on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Locarno Festival

Locarno is considered one of the oldest film festivals, dating back to 1946. Its main screen on the Piazza Grande is the largest of its kind in Europe, and the square can host 8,000 spectators.

Locarno has been the debut international stage for a whole host of directors, such as Jim Jarmusch, Spike Lee and Gus Van Sant. The event, which this year runs from August 1-11, features mainstream and bigger-budget fare and gives a large platform to small movies.

Director Jay Duplass once said “Patrons come not to pimp their film, slip you their screenplay or hobnob with famous people, but to celebrate movies and life.”

This article was automatically imported from our old content management system. If you see any display errors, please let us know: [community-feedback@swissinfo.ch](mailto:community-feedback@swissinfo.ch)

More: [SWI swissinfo.ch](https://www.swissinfo.ch) certified by the Journalism Trust Initiative