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Director Cuts: Greta Gerwig

Rich Johnson

From indie darling to 'Queen of the Blockbuster', Greta Gerwig's talent and success as a filmmaker is one to behold. But, in looking at her early career as an actor, it becomes evident that her more performative path wasn't just about finding her *feet* as an artist but that all important voice post-MeToo. However, Gerwig's films — *despite* remaining female-centric — still manage to prove that her success is in not how she qualifies herself as a 'female' director... but, primarily, as a 'storyteller'. The course will not only highlight her director cuts but also lend further context with a history of women *behind* the camera.

Main films:

Lady Bird (2017)

Director(s): Greta Gerwig

Studio(s): IAC Films / Scott Rudin Productions / Management 360

Little Women (2019)

Director(s): Greta Gerwig

Studio(s): Columbia Pictures / Regency Enterprises / Pascal Pictures

Barbie (2023)

Director(s): Greta Gerwig

Studio(s): Heyday Films / LuckyChap Entertainment / NB/GG Pictures / Mattel Films

References to:

Little Women (1949)

Director(s): Mervyn LeRoy

Studio(s): Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Singin' in the Rain (1952)

Director(s): Gene Kelly, Stanley Donen

Studio(s): Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)

Director(s): Steven Spielberg

Studio(s): Columbia Pictures / EMI Films



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Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles (1975)

Director(s): Chantal Akerman

Studio(s): Paradise Films / Unité Trois

Not Wanted (1949)

Director(s): Elmer Clifton, Ida Lupino (uncredited)

Studio(s): Emerald Productions Inc.

Never Fear (1950)

Director(s): Ida Lupino

Studio(s): The Filmmakers

Outrage (1950)

Director(s): Ida Lupino

Studio(s): The Filmmakers Inc. (distributed by RKO Radio Pictures)

The Hitch-Hiker (1953)

Director(s): Ida Lupino

Studio(s): The Filmmakers Inc. (distributed by RKO Radio Pictures)

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)

Director(s): Stanley Kubrick

Studio(s): Stanley Kubrick Productions

Barbarella (1968)

Director(s): Roger Vadim

Studio(s): Marianne Productions / Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica

Targets (1968)

Director(s): *Peter Bogdanovich*

Studio(s): *Saticoy Productions*

Wanda (1970)

Director(s): Barbara Loden

Studio(s): Foundation for Filmmakers

Klute (1971)

Director(s): Alan J. Pakula

Studio(s): Warner Bros. / Gus Productions

The Last Picture Show (1971)

Director(s): Peter Bogdanovich

Studio(s): BBS Productions



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A New Leaf (1971)

Director(s): Elaine May

Studio(s): Aries Productions / Elkins Entertainment / Elkins Productions International Corporation

What's Up, Doc? (1972)

Director(s): Peter Bogdanovich

Studio(s): Warner Bros. / Saticoy Productions

The King of Marvin Gardens (1972)

Director(s): Bob Rafelson

Studio(s): BBS Productions

The Exorcist (1973)

Director(s): William Friedkin

Studio(s): Warner Bros.

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore (1974)

Director(s): Martin Scorsese

Studio(s): Warner Bros.

A Woman Under the Influence (1974)

Director(s): John Cassavetes

Studio(s): Faces

Girlfriends (1978)

Director(s): Claudia Weill

Studio(s): Cyclops Films

Ishtar (1987)

Director(s): Elaine May

Studio(s): Delphi V Productions

Little Women (1994)

Director(s): Gillian Armstrong

Studio(s): Columbia Pictures

Baghead (2008)

Director(s): Jay Duplass. Mark Duplass

Studio(s): Duplass Brothers Productions

The House of the Devil (2009)

Director(s): Ti West

Studio(s): Glass Eye Pix / RingTheJing Entertainment / Constructovision



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Frances Ha (2012)

Director(s): Noah Baumbach

Studio(s): RT Features / Pine District Pictures / Scott Rudin Productions

Eden (2014)

Director(s): Mia Hansen-Løve

Studio(s): CG Cinéma / Canal+ / OCS

20th Century Women (2016)

Director(s): Mike Mills

Studio(s): Annapurna Pictures / Modern People / Archer Gray

Notes:

“Everybody is always in the middle of their own opera.” — Greta Gerwig

Introduction: Before the Cut

Greta Celeste Gerwig was born in 1983 Sacramento, California to Christine and Gordon Gerwig. She is one of three children she is very close to her parents and went to an all girls Catholic school but raised as a Unitarian Universalist. Otherwise referred to as Uuism Unitarian Universalism is a liberal religious movement characterized by a “free and responsible search for truth and meaning”. She was a keen dancer and also studied fencing.

There's a scene in the *Frances Ha* (2012) with Gerwig and her real-life parents that features a visit to the Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento church that she and her family grew up attending.

Greta came up through the DIY Mumblecore scene – a subgenre of independent cinema which was often improvised and, therefore, characterized by naturalistic acting, low budgets and an emphasis on dialogue over plot. Filmmakers associated with the genre include: Andrew Bujalski, Lynn Shelton, the Duplass brothers (Mark and Jay), Aaron Katz, Joe Swanberg and Ry Russo-Young. The related term mumblegore has been used for films mixing the mumblecore and horror genres. Mumblecore has often been rejected by those working within the scene.

Her first film *LOL* (2006) was with Joe Swanberg and made for 3,000 dollars. They went on to make a number of other films together including *Hannah Takes the Stars* (2007) and *Nights and Weekends* (2008), which she co-directed with Swanberg.

Her 50 favourite movies can be found over on [IndieWire](#).

It is interesting to see her love of musicals coupled with the Amblin vibe and acute taste in world cinema and arthouse.

Chapter 1: It's a Man's World



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Amongst such a male dominated industry there have been few female directors, especially within the Golden Age of Hollywood.

The likes of Kathryn Bigelow and Jane Campion often spring to mind immediately. In 2009, Bigelow made cinematic history with her war drama *The Hurt Locker* becoming the first woman to win the Academy Award for Best Director. She is a female filmmaker who often makes her movies as gutsy as any male counterpart.

New Zealand filmmaker Jane Campion, best known for *The Piano* (1993), also won Best Director for *The Power of the Dog* (2021).

Alice Guy-Blaché, Dorothy Arzner and Ida Lupino are the most important trio of female filmmakers that set the standard.

Criminally, Alice Guy-Blaché fell by the wayside, even though she was at the forefront of pioneering techniques including narrative (she was one of the first to make a narrative fiction film) and editing as well as directing her own films.

Dorothy Arzner (*Dance, Girl, Dance*, 1940) and Alice Guy-Blaché (all pioneers of film from its early beginnings) are the most important trio of female filmmakers that set a standard, but, unfortunately never made the important changes in a male dominated industry. Although Roy Del Ruth quit his work on *Dance, Girl, Dance*, he is often still credited as co-director

Many of Dorothy Arzner's films had a similar theme of unconventional romance. Not only was she one of few female directors during this period but also a gay filmmaker, her work having become an important area of study in the history of queer cinema.

In 1943, after making *First Comes Courage* (1943), Arzner retired from Hollywood. Though her reasons for retirement are not known, it is speculated that it was due to a decline in the critical and commercial performance of her films.

It could also have been due to the increase in sexism and anti-gay bigotry that followed the implementation of the Hays Code. Despite leaving Hollywood, Arzner continued to work in the field of film. She made Women's Army Corps training films during World War II.

Ida Lupino was born in London on February 4th 1918. Far from the typical 'drama queen' and skirting around the label of 'movie star', her reputation as a renaissance woman and leader of women behind the camera is an inspiration. Not only was she respected as an actress and director but was also involved in writing and producing. Throughout her 48-year career, she appeared in 59 films and directed eight, working primarily in the United States, where she became a citizen in 1948.

As with most actresses during the 1930s, she emulated the Hollywood style, dying her hair blonde.

But there was a fierce streak bubbling underneath.



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As briefly mentioned, the most notable point about Ida Lupino is how important she is as one of few females working behind the camera. In fact, she became Hollywood's first credited female director since the retirement of Dorothy Arzner in 1943.

With a hand in the writing, although not credited, she directed alongside Elmar Clifton on the 1949 film *Not Wanted*. This was due to Clifton suffering a heart attack soon after production began which meant Ida directed the film almost in its entirety. As the producer, however, Lupino generously gave Clifton the sole directing credit.

As with a lot of headstrong female stars of the era, Ida Lupino often got on the wrong side of the studio bosses. Jack Warner, in particular, often objected to her casting. As alluded to already, she would also refuse poorly written roles that she felt were beneath her dignity as an actress, even making script revisions that the studio saw as unacceptable behaviour. When she rejected to star alongside Ronald Reagan in the film *Kings Row* (1942) she was suspended and when she returned created a strained relationship with Warner Bros.

Her first credit as director was for *Never Fear* (1950) which she co-wrote with Collier Young. Having contracted polio in 1934 she suffered the same fevers and pains of never walking again, as Carol Williams' character does in the film.

However, while on suspension, she began to study the filmmaking processes including editing and realised, in her own words, "someone else seemed to be doing all the interesting work".

She went on to start up her own independent production company, Filmmakers with her second husband, Collier Young, aimed at producing smaller low-budget "issue-oriented films". She also co-wrote and directed the film *Outrage* (1950) which is one of the first films about rape.

The Hitch-Hiker (1953) is another notable film and perhaps her most spoke about as director. Both *The Hitch-Hiker* and *Outrage* were selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally historically or aesthetically significant".

#moguls:

The film industry has been dominated by men since the pioneering days. Born out of industry and innovation, the majority of figures in film history are male, Hollywood, in particular eventually governed by the Moguls. These included: David O. Selznick and Louis B. Mayer (MGM), Darryl F. Zanuck (20th Century Fox), Adolph Zukor (Paramount Pictures), and Harry, Albert, Sam, and Jack Warner (Warner Bros.). Most of these individuals were first generation immigrants, Hollywood built by Jews who had vacated Europe. It would be of no surprise that even during the early days of cinema, women were exploited and abused.

#metoo:

Which brings us to the inherent problem, exploding with the report of film producer Harvey Weinstein's history of abuse in October 2017.



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Although the term “Me Too” can be traced back to 2006, following the exposure of numerous sexual-abuse allegations against Weinstein the movement began to spread virally as a hashtag on social media.

The Women’s Rights Movements:

It would be worth looking at the history of The Women’s Rights Movements that have helped to empower women based on exploitation, pay, abortion and abuse. In parallel to New Hollywood, the ‘second wave’ of feminism was another major backdrop of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Obviously we are reminded of the suffragette movement but another major turning point over 50 years later was the reaction to the publication of Betty Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) in which she spoke of the problem that “lay buried, unspoken” in the mind of the suburban housewife: utter boredom and lack of fulfillment.

Politics included: work, the family, and sexuality with organized activism continuing up to the early 2010s.

“I really hate slick pictures. They're too perfect to be believable. I don't mean just in the look. I mean in the rhythm, in the cutting, the music — everything. The slicker the technique is, the slicker the content becomes, until everything turns into Formica, including the people.” — Barbara Loden, talking to the *New York Times* in March 1971.

Barbara Loden (1932-1980). An actress of stage and screen during the '50s and '60s she appeared in films such as Elia Kazan's film *Wild River* (1960) and *Splendor in the Grass* (1961). She is often labeled the ‘female counterpart to John Cassavetes’.

She married Kazan (23 years her senior) in 1967.

Wanda (1970) is more in line with the British New Wave than anything else, it’s depiction of the blue-collar background and small, tired, run down communities creating a much smaller landscape than one would expect from an American movie.

Criticised at the time for its unsympathetic female lead (Loden front and centre), the film creates a desperate loneliness and isolated view of the world.

“The '60s may be idealized in the movies from a cultural point of view, but the decade was all about discord and a big generational split that was very painful.” — Jane Fonda



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Jane Fonda (Born: 1937). Daughter of Henry Fonda, brother of Peter and Aunt of Bridget.

Iconography her specialty ever since the vivid designs of *Barbarella* (1968) hit the screen. Fonda was married to the director Roger Vadim from 1964-1973. In fact all of her films, including *What's Up Doc?* (1972), she ended up with no credit for costume design, despite them being an integral part (and character) of the productions.

In the original script Bree's psychiatrist was male, but Fonda felt in rehearsals that the character would never open up to a man, so she requested that the part be changed to a woman.

Known as much for her activism as her acting. She was arrested countless times over the years, including during the filming of *Klute* while on anti-Vietnam war protests.

She would later apologise for her photo from 1972 where she is sat on top of a Vietnamese anti-aircraft gun. You would only have to go back 10-15 years previously during the McCarthy era and her career would have been over even showing a slight left leaning let alone poking the bear.

Another iconic moment included starting the fitness video which became a major part of the home video boom.

"[Polly] was always speaking her mind, often when people didn't want to hear it ... Working that hard and fighting that hard really took an emotional toll on her." — Karina Longworth. Interview: "The Untold History of Polly Platt: An Interview with You Must Remember This" Karina Longworth."

Polly Platt (1939-2011). Often overshadowed by her husband (at the time) Peter Bogdanovich, Platt was instrumental in his early success as a film producer, production designer and screenwriter. She lost her first husband in a car accident in 1959 only 8 months after they were married, later marrying Bogdanovich in 1962. They had two children.

Bogdanovich began an open affair with actress Cybill Shepherd while filming *The Last Picture Show* (1971) who she had helped discover. Over the years she mentored and also discovered: director and writer Cameron Crowe, and actors Tatum O'Neal, Owen Wilson, Luke Wilson and director Wes Anderson.

All of her films, including *What's Up Doc?* (1972), she ended up with no credit for costume design, despite them being an integral part (and character) of the productions.

Not only did she work on production design for Bogdanovich's first film *Targets* (1968) but also came up with the story and remained uncredited for the costume design.

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Platt became the first female film art director to be accepted into the Art Director's Guild. Her set pieces and visual flourishes are particularly distinctive, influences of which can be seen in contemporary films and directors' work, such as Wes Anderson.

Karina Longworth's podcast "*You Must Remember This*" covers Platt's life extensively in her 10 episode series 'Polly Platt: The Invisible Woman'.

Husband and wife collaborations were common amongst the Movie Brats. This also included Michael and Julia Phillips (1944-2002) who produced *The Sting* (1973), and *Taxi Driver* (1976), and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) as well as George and Marcia Lucas (born: 1945). We'll come back to her in week 8 and 'The Birth of the Blockbuster.' But worth noting that as well as working with his wife on the editing of *American Graffiti* alongside *Jaws* editor Verna Fields, George Lucas also co-wrote the screenplay for with Gloria Katz and Willard Huyck.

"The only safe thing is to take a chance." — Elaine May

Multi-talented Elaine May (born: 1932) is an American comedian, filmmaker, playwright, and actress. She was nominated for best actress in *A New Leaf* (1971) and in 2022 was honored by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences by being awarded the Honorary Academy Award for her "bold, uncompromising approach to filmmaking, as a writer, director, and actress".

Multi-talented Elaine May (born: 1932) is an American comedian, filmmaker, playwright, and actress. She was nominated for best actress in *A New Leaf* (1971) and in 2022 was honored by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences by being awarded the Honorary Academy Award for her "bold, uncompromising approach to filmmaking, as a writer, director, and actress".

In the early '60s she performed with Mike Nichols as a stand-up comedy team, Nichols and May. She brought improvisational comedy into the mainstream with her kooky characteristics; somewhat of a 'clown auteur'. *A New Leaf* often feels like sketches stitched together; quick witted and whimsical.

The final film was drastically re-cut and shortened by Robert Evans and Paramount before its release. There has never been a director's cut of the film available and the original shooting script has also never been made publicly available. At 3 hours in length, May's version was much, much darker.

May would go on to write and direct *Ishtar* (1987). Produced by and starring Warren Beatty alongside Dustin Hoffman, it was a notorious flop and drew media attention before its release based on the production running over budget and clashes between May and Beatty. It was made worse by a change in studio management at Columbia Pictures during post-production undermining the film's release.

"There's no doubt that the patriarchy that we live in also controls the movie industry. The heads of the studios are men, and it's reflected in the scripts they buy and the work that gets made." — Ellen Burstyn



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Ellen Burstyn (born 1932). Started on Broadway and later joined the famous and joined Lee Strasberg's The Actors Studio in New York City in 1967. Strasberg was well known for having developed 'method' acting that set out to develop more sincere and expressive performances; Marlon Brando and James Dean paving the way.

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore (1974) was Martin Scorsese's next film after *Mean Streets*. Burstyn was allowed to choose her own director and in seeking advice off Coppola was recommended Scorsese but was concerned about whether he could tell a story about women due to not seeing anything in *Mean Streets* that showed this.

Scorsese was upfront and stated he had no experience with women's stories but wanted to learn and surrounded himself with female crewmembers, including George Lucas' wife Marcia Lucas on editing. The opening sequence was designed to be an homage to *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).

Other notable films include: *The King of Marvin Gardens* (1972) and her Oscar-winning performance in Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000).

But, arguably, her most well-known role is as Chris MacNeil, who helplessly watches her daughter become possessed in William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973).

"People in independent film have a passion; they're not in it for the money." — Gena Rowlands

Gena Rowlands (1930-2024) is often considered one of the greatest actresses of all time and her performance in *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974), directed by her husband John Cassavetes, is considered one of the *greatest* and most influential female performances of all time.

Cassavetes and Rowlands were married from 1954 until his death in 1989. His films are owned by Faces Distribution, overseen by Gena Rowlands and Julian Schlossberg. Their son, Nick Cassavetes directed the popular romantic drama *The Notebook* (2004), starring his mother, Ryan Gosling, Rachel McAdams and James Garner.

"They'd never seen a woman direct." — Claudia Weill. On 'sleazy' Hollywood men, talking to [The Guardian](#) in July 2021.

Claudia Weill was born in 1947. While making her next film *It's My Turn* (1980), she experienced sexism and sexual harassment from producer Ray Stark who also interfered with her vision of the film. Due to this experience she hasn't directed feature films since, only working in television.

Often heralded as a lo-fi indie miracle, Claudia Weill's *Girlfriends* (1978) was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress, who deemed it "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" in 2019. One of Stanley Kubrick's favorite films of the era. Made independently but sold to Warner Brothers after multiple awards at Cannes, Filmex and Sundance.

Began life as a thirty-minute short (also the first seven minutes) funded by the American Film Institute for \$10,000. Expanding it as a full-length movie she received taxpayer funds through the



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National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council for the Arts amounting to \$80,000, plus help by private investors once money ran out and stalled production. Although actual filming only took six to seven weeks, the lack of funds etc. caused the production to stretch out over two and a half years.

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Chapter 2: Actor

Horror Years:

Around the same time as her mumblecore films, Gerwig also starred in a number of horror movie. The first of which was the “mumblecore” film *Baghead* by the Duplass brothers followed by Ti West’s *The House of the Devil* (2009) in which she enjoys some pizza and comes to a rather violent end in a car. It’s perhaps her most extreme movie and, in hindsight, rather odd seeing her in such a sinister little film. Great goes Hollyweird.

Indie Years:

“I’m so embarrassed. I’m not a real person yet.” — Frances Ha

In her breakout performance, Noah Baumbach’s *Frances Ha* follows a New York woman (Frances), who becomes an apprentice at a dance company and, although not really a dancer, throws herself headlong into her dreams. The film is full of the defining quirks and idiosyncrasies one would expect, especially from a Baumbach and Gerwig partnership, shot as low-key and covertly as possible on New York City streets under the title “Untitled Digital Workshop.” Baumbach shot the movie in black and white to “boil it down to its barest bones,” and create an immediate “history” and “a kind of instant nostalgia.”

Gerwig is in every scene of the film and, contrary to the movie's improvisational feel, the actors followed a very tightly-written script with little to no deviation.

The film shows the evolution of friendship and to appreciate the small but important moments in your day. *Frances Ha* is also reminiscent of Woody Allen's films who she was inspired by as an artist. She has gone on record as saying: “I cannot change that fact now”, also regretting starring in his 2012 film *To Rome With Love*

Noah Baumbach (previously married to Jennifer Jason-Leigh) and Greta Gerwig have been together since 2013 and were married in 2023. They have two sons.



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Other films around this time include the superb French film *Eden* (2014) directed by Mia Hansen-Løve – in which Gerwig has a small but significant role – and Mike Mills’ *20th Century Women* (2016) in which she stars alongside Anette Benning and Elle Fanning.

Chapter 3: Writer/Director

“The only thing exciting about 2002 is that it’s a palindrome.” — Christine ‘Lady Bird’ McPherson

In her feature debut, Greta Gerwig flies solo as writer/director telling the story of Christine “Lady Bird” McPherson (Saoirse Ronan); a fiercely independent teenager who tries to make her own way in the world while wanting to get out of her hometown of Sacramento, California. It’s a story close to heart and set in Gerwig’s hometown as Ladybird tries to get away from her complicated mother and recently-unemployed father. All the while she longs for adventure, sophistication, and opportunity, but finds little of that in her Sacramento Catholic high school.

In the opening scene, Marion and Lady Bird are sitting on the edge of a hotel bed in front of draped windows representing backstage curtains. This is the first in a motif of proscenium shots conceptually framing the characters on literal and figurative stages and altars that highlight the theatricality of Catholicism and juxtapose places of worship with places of performance. “Who are we really and who are we performing ourselves to be?”

The first thing Greta Gerwig told her cinematographer Sam Levy was, “I want this film to look like a memory.” He was visually inspired by Andrew Wyeth paintings that reflected California’s agriculture and topography. Golden fields bathed in golden light can be seen out each window as Lady Bird and her mom road trip home listening to *The Grapes of Wrath* on tape. I’d go as far to say Wyeth’s isolated characters too.

The film is a coming of age tale that shows all the social awkwardness and quirks one would expect from a Greta Gerwig film.

The film is ultimately about finding beauty and romance in unexpected places, i.e. mother/daughter relationships and best friendships.

“Women, they have minds, and they have souls, as well as just hearts.” — Jo March

Based on Louisa May Alcott 1868 novel, *Little Women* tells the story of the lives of the four March sisters during the American Civil War as they learn to navigate love, loss, and the trials of growing up.

Gerwig was six months pregnant with her first child when filming ended and went into labor 48 hours after turning in her rough edit. She hid her pregnancy during filming so well that nobody on set knew she was pregnant.

Gerwig worked extensively to have her version mirror the story of Louisa May Alcott, who drew from her own life for her work. Gerwig also sort advice from Steven Spielberg on making a period



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piece with natural light. Spielberg persuaded Gerwig to shoot on 35mm film stock rather than digital.

The March house was designed to look plain from the outside but be bright and colourful inside. Because of this, it earned the nickname “the jewel box” on set.

With this film and *Lady Bird*, Gerwig became the first woman to have directed two movies that were nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture.

With this film and *Lady Bird*, Gerwig became the first woman to have directed two movies that were nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture.

Nine adaptations in total. There is only a single surviving image from a 1917 version.

Aside from Gerwig’s film, the most well-known adaptations are the 1949 and 1994 versions, both of which have all-star casts.

“The real world isn't what I thought it was.” — Barbie

Moving to the surprise blockbuster hit *Barbie*, Greta Gerwig defied expectations by creating both a populist and absurd movie that tells the story of Barbie and Ken leaving their seemingly perfect world of Barbie Land to journey in to the real world. However, they soon discover the joys and perils of living among humans that changes the two dolls for better and for worse.

With lead actress Margot Robbie as producer, Gerwig nurtured a fun atmosphere on set that seeps through every frame.

The New Yorker perfectly summarised that: “It’s a film that’s energized throughout by a sense of artistic freedom and uninhibited creative passion greater than what Gerwig has brought to even her previous projects made outside the ostensible constraints of studio filmmaking.”

The film used a lot of practical sets and old school filmmaking techniques that lends a genuine practicality to the film.

Barbie was a global phenomenon, which, along with *Oppenheimer* managed to bring people back into the cinemas. Gosling is a revelation in the film as he sends up the patriarchy. Apparently, Margot Robbie cracked up laughing at Ryan Gosling's performance so often during their scenes together, that she and Greta Gerwig had to work out a system in which she would try and hold a smile on her face for just long enough to cut before breaking character.

Gerwig instructed all of the Ken actors to train and work out in the same gym every morning to establish and maintain their bond and competitiveness.

When Gerwig took on the film, she insisted on certain bonding experiences. This included cast slumber parties and “movie church”. Although there are obvious Kubrick references via *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) in the film’s opening



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The *Barbie* Letterboxd watch list can be found [here](#) and via the [article](#).

The film boasts an incredible amount of influences from the colours and set pieces of *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964) to the obscurities and cult cinema of Alejandro Jodorowsky, specifically *The Holy Mountain* (1973).

It has been interesting to see Greta Gerwig's career go from humble beginnings to taking on huge IP such as *Barbie*, her success also reflected in how she has been photographed for magazines from *Vogue* to *Variety*.

Contemporaries:

Great Gerwig's contemporaries include: Chloé Zhao (*Nomadland*), Nia DaCosta (*Candyman*, 2019), Justine Triet (*Anatomy of a Fall*), Prano Bailey-Bond (*Censor*) and Rose Glass (*Saint Maud*, *Love Lies Bleeding*).

"The number of female directors has gotten better. We're not done yet." In an article from May this year Greta Gerwig was interviewed while she presided over a nine-member jury, which also included Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda along with actors Lily Gladstone and Eva Green. Humble as ever she went on to say: "One of the favourite things that I do is to watch cinema and discuss it – and now I'm getting to do it with the most wonderful minds for 10 whole days. I'm still in shock that I'm here." [The Guardian](#), May 2024.