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## America's Pioneer Female Filmmakers

Kelsey Wexler

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# 2019 Bentonville Film Festival – Assets for Commemorating Pioneer Female Filmmakers 21c Video Gallery Installation

**Final Video – Installation scheduled for Friday, May 3, 2019**

<https://vimeo.com/332847091>

Password: BFF2019

9 minutes, 40 seconds

**Main Wall Graphic – 8-foot 4 inches x 8-foot 11 inches**

COMMEMORATING

# AMERICA'S PIONEER FEMALE FILMMAKERS

*"A woman can bring to this work splendid enthusiasm and imagination; a natural love of detail and an intuitive knowledge of character. All of these are supposed to be feminine traits, and yet they are all necessary to the successful director." - Ida May Park (1918)*





Entrance Archway Graphic – 16 x 40 inches



## Trifold brochure – Outside



*Motherhood: Life's Greatest Miracle (1925)*

**Lita Lawrence**  
Lita Lawrence is believed to be the very first African-American woman to direct a narrative feature film. Her most well-known work was *Motherhood: Life's Greatest Miracle* in 1925, a film which was thought to be lost, but then rediscovered and acquired by the Library of Congress in 2015. This landmark film addresses the issues of abortion and birth control for women in the 1920s.



*The Hazards of Helen (1915)*

**Helen Holmes**  
Holmes started her career in 1912 with Keystone, until she signed with Kalem Company. Holmes appeared in more than 30 short films, and her athletic ability to do stunts led her to a big break in show business. In 1914, she performed all of her own stunts in the series *The Hazards of Helen*, which included leaping onto runaway trains in pursuit of robbers. In more than one instance, she was supposed to be rescued by the handsome hero, but ends up saving herself. *"I don't mind hanging over bridges and jumping from horses' backs to runaway engines; it is rather fun. But what I hate is wearing these greasy old overalls."* - Helen Holmes

COMMEMORATING

**AMERICA'S PIONEER FEMALE FILMMAKERS**

This project was organized by the University of Arkansas Department of Communication Film Appreciation Society, in collaboration with 21c Museum & Hotel, the Bentonville Film Festival, and Kino Lorber, Inc.







**KINO LORBER**

Exhibition and documentary produced by Tyler Costello, Sydney Mulvenon, Kelsey Wexler, and Chenwei Wu. Graphics and printing by Miscellaneous Media. Faculty consultants Frank Milo Scheide and Margaret Miller Butcher, the Department of Communication, University of Arkansas. Special thanks to Thomas Hoehn for his assistance in making this project possible.



*When Little Lady Song (1916)*

5 include festival

COMMEMORATING

**AMERICA'S PIONEER FEMALE FILMMAKERS AT 21C**



*Solome (1928)*


## Trifold brochure – Inside

*"A woman can bring to this work splendid enthusiasm and imagination; a natural love of detail and an intuitive knowledge of character. All of these are supposed to be feminine traits, and yet they are all necessary to the successful director."* - Ida May Park

COMMEMORATING

**AMERICA'S PIONEER FEMALE FILMMAKERS**

This installation seeks to bring light to an often-forgotten group of female filmmakers who revolutionized the entire industry. Through their cinematic contributions, these women continue to provide inspiration for following generations of filmmakers and artists.



*Solome (1928)*

**Alla Nazimova**  
Beginning her career in the theatre before embracing motion pictures, Russian-born Alla Nazimova first found fame starring as an empowering suffragist in 1916's *War Brides*. She was a well-known early LGBTQIA+ icon in the film industry and fulfilled nearly every role behind the scenes at her production company, Nazimova Productions. Nazimova, like many other women at the time, faced great hardship in the industry due to her gender and sexual orientation; at one time in her career, she even wrote her screenplays under a male pseudonym.




*The Ocean Wave (1917)*

**Alice Guy-Blaché**  
Involved in over 1000 films between 1895 and 1920, Alice Guy-Blaché's natural feel for cinematic narratives truly made her one of the most powerful figures in the industry, regardless of gender. As one of the earliest narrative film directors in history, Guy-Blaché was the first woman to start a film production company of her own, Solax Studios, in 1910. She was also one of the first to experiment with color, special effects, and synchronized sound technology. *"She was a filmmaker of rare sensitivity, with a remarkable poetic eye."* - Martin Scorsese




*Dancing Coppers (1929)*

**Zora Neale Hurston**  
Born in 1891, Zora Neale Hurston grew up in a culturally affirming community in Eatonville, Florida: the first incorporated black township in the U.S. Seeing the evidence of black achievement all around her, Hurston was never indoctrinated by false claims relating to racial inferiority. Besides her better-known work as a novelist, Hurston is the first known African-American ethnographic filmmaker. In her short actualities, Hurston captured warm and intimate glimpses of African-American life.



*The Curse of Quon Gwon (1917)*

**Marion E. Wong**  
As the first Asian American filmmaker, Marion E. Wong started the Mandarin Film Company in Oakland, CA, in 1917. Her film *The Curse of Quon Gwon* (1917), is the earliest known example of a Chinese-American independent motion picture. In the movie, Wong also casts herself as a complex villain as the traditional mother-in-law of the immigrant girl torn between past and present.



*Suspense (1913)*

**Lois Weber**  
Beginning her career in 1907, Lois Weber felt strongly about using film as a medium for kickstarting political change. With films portraying abortion, poverty, the wage gap, and so many other topics that are controversial even today, Weber was one of the early auteurs. Lois Weber was a pioneer in using technical innovation to further screen narrative, as seen in the dramatic use of a split screen in her 1913 film, *Suspense*. *"I grew up in the business when everybody was so busy learning their particular branch of the new industry, no one had time to notice whether or not a woman was gaining a foothold."* - Lois Weber



**T-Shirts** – Student will staff the installation during BFF wearing these



## Finished Installation – 21c Museum Hotel

