

Hilary Swank urges more compelling roles for women in Hollywood

Actress laments the gap in both pay and opportunity for women seeking challenging roles in cinema.
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Hilary Swank arriving at the 18th Annual Hollywood Film Awards at The Palladium in Los Angeles, California. (Photo: Peter West/ACE/INFphoto.com)

During an interview before students at Loyola Marymount University School of Film & TV last week, [Hilary Swank](#) decried Hollywood's gender gap, explaining why women continue to face challenges in acquiring both equal pay and meaningful roles.

"My male counterpart will get paid 10 times more than me — 10 times," she said in remarks [recorded by The Hollywood Reporter](#). "Not double, but 10 times for the same job. We only have *this much* left for the female actress. There's two genders on this Earth. Both are compelling, interesting, diverse, wonderful in all their own separate ways, some that are similar, some that are not. And yet there's an influx of male roles and there's just not for women."

Swank said that a lack of compelling roles is one reason why her filming schedule sometimes features large gaps.

"People will say to me, geez, we haven't really seen you for a year and a half," she said. "It's like well 'cause I haven't found a role that I found compelling. And that's frustrating because they can be created."

Swank's remarks come as Hollywood's gender gap is coming under increasing scrutiny, with some disturbing statistics to go along with it. Did you know that [only 23 percent of women](#) are independent film directors? Or that the world's highest paid female star in 2013 [made about the same](#) as the two lower-paid male stars? This

year's Oscar race does even more to underscore the issue, with [Gregg Kilday of The Hollywood Reporter writing](#) that the Academy will have a hard time filling its five slots for Best Actress, but has a glut of contenders for Best Actor.

"It's not the Academy's fault that the best actress pickings are slim, of course," he writes. "It simply reflects the fact that the industry as a whole spends much more time and money on movies about men, and that in turn provides lots of opportunities for male actors to strut their stuff while actresses appear mostly in supportive roles as wives, girlfriends and mothers."

One of those nominations will most certainly belong to Swank, whose new film "The Homesman" has film critics [hinting at a third Oscar for the 40-year-old](#).

"To me this is a feminist movie," said Swank, who plays a single, middle-aged woman in the wild American frontier. "To me it's about the objectification and trivialization of women. And it takes place in the mid 1800s. But us women know exactly what that feels like right now in 2014. So even though talking about gay, lesbian, transgender issues and how far they've come, same with equality for women and how far we've come, yet how far we still need to go. So that was something that I really, really related to and loved right off the page. I thought how great that Tommy Lee Jones, this kind of, you know, this person that people see as this like rough man is at the helm of telling this feminist story. I love that. I loved how that in itself defied stereotypes."

"The Homesman" is in theaters now. Check out a trailer below.

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