

## **Contemporary Women Filmmakers**

Women have been in the movies since they began: as actors, writers, editors, costume designers, production assistants, “go-fers” and even as producers. Until recently, however, they have very rarely served as directors –the position that some think is the most essential and most creative role in the process. Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, there have been more women directors. Many of them have also written the stories and/or the screenplays of the films they have made. We will examine their accomplishments and consider whether their work has provided us with a new and distinctive perspective. Do their films represent a different view of the world? Do they look at different parts of our lives? Have they invented new techniques and a different kind of writing? Are we seeing an unanticipated or surprising array of artistic visions? How has the audience for films responded to the achievements of these directors? And how does being writer and director of the same work change the movie making process and affect what we see on the screen?

We will look at these questions mainly in the work of American and British filmmakers, most of whom have been active –and very productive--since 2000. We will provide some background by talking about a few of the early directors and some who became prominent at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will view and discuss the work of a different filmmaker in each of the 8 sessions of the course. After an introduction to the director and her work, we will screen up to one hour of a film, and then share our responses and assessments of the work.

A syllabus of the films will be circulated to students enrolled in the course so that they may have a chance to watch the complete films on DVD or a streaming platform. A longer list of other films, for further reference, by these and other directors will be circulated to the class. There is no assigned reading, but it will help to read critical articles about contemporary women’s films in current newspapers and journals.

**LEADER:** Judith Walzer was provost and professor of literature at The New School.

**TUESDAYS:** 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., 8 weeks: February 25 through April 14

**LOCATION:** The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville, Maximum 45 seats