
Diversity in the ACO.....



Lucy Bristow ACO

Greetings fellow camera operators!

To kick off, here are some numbers.....out of the ACOs membership of (I believe) 107 full members, I believe we have 1 female member, 1 BAME member and 1 LGBT member, though I'm hoping that I've underestimated this..... I'd be happy to be corrected.

Of 19 Associate ACO members, we have 4 female members.

I am trying to steer some initiatives over the next year that may encourage more women to join the ACO. I feel unqualified to do the same 'enlisting' among the BAME or LGBT camera crew.....maybe in the future there'll be someone else who can explore these areas of recruitment.

Many of you may wonder why this is an issue that we need to tackle, and I'd encourage you to read this article written by Hazel Palmer (a TV camera operator) for the GTC's magazine.

There are large numbers of women working in all grades in the UK film industry. I'm creating a database of female camera crew in all grades, and there are currently around 60 on the list, which Agnieszka Szeliga (Assoc ACO) is helping me to update. We are currently in the process of emailing all the women on the list, with a covering letter that specifically encourages all to look at the ACO website and considering joining, whether as an Associate member or a full member. This database could be made widely available to try & encourage inclusion of female camera operators within crews. Out of these 60 odd women, more than half are 1st & 2nd A/Cs.....in other words potential future camera operators. There are also at least 10 to 20 women who are currently working as camera operators, on TV dramas and films. Obviously some of them are primarily DPs, so under the current rules wouldn't qualify for full ACO membership, but perhaps some female DPs would join as Associate members if they thought it could lead to some work? Perhaps we need to be pro-active about recruiting a more diverse membership- for example, rather than waiting for women to apply to the ACO, our president could approach targeted women who have sufficient experience under their belts, and ask them whether they would

consider joining our organisation.



Diversity cont.....



Illana Garrad - on Netflix's Sex Education

When the ACO first started up, I was approached by Pete Cavaciuti.....perhaps without that personal contact I wouldn't have thought it was an organisation that would represent me. There has been a slight shift in attitudes towards crewing up films in terms of diversity occasionally now there will be a specific request for a female camera operator- and how does it look to the world out there when there's only one full member of the ACO that's female.....out of 107 members..... pretty poor.

Having worked with camera crews for 30 odd years, my observation is that there will never be huge numbers of women who want to be camera operators- in other words, don't feel that your livelihoods are threatened by any of this! There are many reasons, childbearing being quite up there, why women drop out before reaching the operating 'rung' on the ladder, but for those who hang on in there, they must be offered the opportunities to get experience and progress, otherwise nothing will ever change.

Not wishing to sound like a broken record, I'd like to remind all ACO members to think about this when crewing up, and when bringing in crew on dailies etc- try thinking a little bit outside the your usual circle of white male camera crew? Perhaps it feels a bit risky, but nothing will ever change without taking some risks in life.

Thanks - Lucy Bristow ACO

