

Aggela Despotidou - Editor

ShortCV

She started working in the film industry in 1994 as an editing assistant having concluded her studies in the Hellenic Cinema and Television School Stavrakos.

Since then she has worked as an editing assistant or as an editor in a variety of film, series and documentary productions.

The last nine years she lives and works in London.

Throughout her career she has worked with distinguished directors and producers like Ridley Scott, Stephen Frears, John Madden, Tom Hardy, Jessica Hobbs, Julian Jarrold, Michalis Cacoyiannis etc.



How did you decide to work for the film industry and specifically in the editing department?

I loved cinema and without knowing if I have the talent or the capability to work in it I decided to start my studies while working for a shipping company. I studied to be a director but during the last year of my studies I realized this specialty did not really suit me. I was lucky as the first job I got in the film industry was as an assistant of a really good and distinguished editor who taught me the art and I loved it. So, it was luck and choice that led me to editing.

Was it difficult to start working as an editor in Greece and can you tell us a little bit about your first job?

I got my first job easily. A dear friend of mine from the university had already started working as an assistant editor and she suggested I replace her as she had found another job

as assistant director. The editor I worked with did many movies and as such I did not stop working and learning.

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During the years you have been working have you seen the number of women in the field rise?

I think so. In the editing department there are always a larger number of women compared to other specialties.

At what level and how in your opinion and through your experiences is gender discrimination expressed in this specific job? Was it something you experienced/observed that you could share with us?

I haven’t felt I was ever treated unjust because of my gender. I mean I don’t believe a man got the job that I would only because I was a woman. What is certain is that men get in the “inner circle” more easily as many producers and directors are men and feel more at ease working with men.



Since the last few years you have lived and worked in the UK and before that in Greece, do you notice differences in how the gender and sexism issue is treated in the professional field of the two countries?

The UK is more advanced in the issue of equality in the professional field. Of course there is discrimination but it is significantly lower. Because of mentality and legislation they are not allowed to show special preference. I believe the biggest inequality is in the salary department. Women need to make stronger claims to get the same salary a man does.

“When you love what you do you never lose. With ethos, knowledge and hard work you can achieve what you want. However, as a woman be ready to fight a bit harder. Do not hesitate to claim what is rightfully yours.”

From what we see in your CV you have worked in several genres in film and TV. Is there one you prefer and do you find differences between film and television?

I prefer the film industry. My love for it led me where I am today. The differences between the two are not huge. It sounds weird but the technical and artistic creators come from two different worlds. They have different behavioral codes. It is difficult to explain. If anyone thinks about it is logical. Maybe the art of filming is the same and follows the same rules but the target is different and thus the way it is being approached.



In your opinion what are the necessary characteristics for a good collaboration with an editor? And can you give us an example of such a collaboration?

The necessary characteristic of every collaboration is respect. A director and an editor work always very close and thus it is necessary to share respect. Editing is a safe space of the creator's expression. The editor through his/her knowledge and experience creates an environment where the director can express themselves. We will see that a director more hardly changes his/her editor compared to other specialties in the field. An example in Greece would be Lanthimos and Mavropsaridis.

What advice would you give a young woman that wants to work for the film and the TV industry and specifically within the editing department?

I would give the same one that I would give a man in any job. - When you love what you do you never lose. With ethos, knowledge and hard work you can achieve what you want. However, as a woman be ready to fight a bit harder. Do not hesitate to claim what is rightfully yours.

Can you give us the names of film makers (editors, directors, producers etc) that you admire for their work?

I do not like distinguishing between colleagues. I will give some names of women I have worked with.

From Greece – **editor:** Ioanna Spiliopoulou, **director:** Margarita Manta

From the UK – **editors:** Mags Arnold, Alex Mackie, Frances Parker, Lucia Zucchetti, **directors:** Jessica Hobbs, Carol Morley



Finally, can you tell us on what you are working on at the moment?

I am working on the 4th season of The Crown. This series has not stopped surprising me from the quality of their scripts to the production and the strong team behind it. It is not by accident that the same people work in it since season 1.