
The Absence of Creative Women as Judges in Advertising Awards: a Case Study of El Sol (1998-2008)

L'absència de dones creatives com a jutges en els premis de publicitat: estudi del cas de El Sol (1998-2008)

David Roca Correa
Isam Alegre Rodríguez
Natalia Pueyo Ayhan
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

This study examines the issue of the absence of women in advertising creative jobs by observing their presence as members of the juries of the El Sol Iberoamerican Festival of Advertising Communication. The juries were analyzed according to their professional occupation, the categories they award prizes to and the fields in which they work. The findings revealed that, despite an increase between 2004 and 2008, the real presence of women is low, as women make up only 16.67% of jury members. Such underrepresentation is bound to alter the general concept of "what's creative". Hence, hiring more women as jury members is recommended.

Key words: advertising, creativity, gender, woman, awards, El Sol.

Aquest estudi tracta l'absència de dones treballant com a creatives publicitàries observant la seva presència com a membres del jurat de El Sol: Festival Iberoamericano de la Comunicació Publicitaria. Els jurats van ésser analitzats segons la seva ocupació professional, les categories que premiaven i els camps on treballaven. Els resultats van mostrar que, tot i que va créixer entre 2004 i 2008, la presència real de dones és baixa, essent dones un 16.67% dels membres del jurat. S'observa com aquesta baixa representació pot alterar la concepció general de "què és creatiu". Per tant es recomana incloure més dones com a jurat.

Paraules clau: publicitat, creativitat, gènere, dona, premis, El Sol.

RESEARCH ON CREATIVITY AND ADVERTISING FESTIVALS

Advertising festivals have become a remarkable phenomenon within to be emerged from the advertising industry, not only in Spain but also internationally, and they have witnessed unbridled growth in recent years.

Helgesen (1994) conducted a study based on 40 in-depth interviews with Norwegian advertising professionals. The author discusses advertising festivals as follows: *First*. The advertising prizes are broadly perceived as vital promotional instruments for advertising agencies. *Second*. The prizes are seen as expressions of creative excellence. *Third*. To advertising professionals, the prizes are ways of reinforcing/promoting their careers. *Fourth*. Advertising prizes are also seen as symbols of professional leadership, even though there are some qualms regarding its validity. *Fifth*. There is a heavy correlation between perceived professional leadership and advertising prizes. *Sixth*. The prizes are also one of the few possibilities of labelling an agency in terms of its professional patrimony.

West, Collins & Miciak (2003) note that winning an advertising creativity prize has different implications for the advertiser: a huge impact on company sales, a competitive advantage for the organisation and a reason for hiring or firing agencies.

Even though Polonsky and Waller (1995) state that these kind of competitions are criticised for their operating dynamics. Every year thousands of advertising agencies pay steep fees to participate in the festival programmes (Schweitzer & Hester, 1992). One of the reasons why the agencies show such keen interest in advertising festivals is that the creative standard of the agency's work, the publicity on recent campaigns and the record of results can influence a client's choice of agency (Wackman, Salmon and Salmon, 1986).

WHICH STUDIES HAVE ANALYZED THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISING?

According to Tom Eslinger, Chairman of the Cannes jury in 2007, "the three winning campaigns will be heavily copied in the forthcoming months because they are truly original" (Egido, 2007: 10). The influence of Cannes festival in creatives is huge, however, all judges in this advertising festival have been traditionally "all males" (Kreshel, 2003). This is a common circumstance in advertising, that starts with the absence of women in the creative departments of advertising agencies. This phenomenon has drawn the attention of several authors during the last decades (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Martin, 2007; Mallia, 2006; Nixon, 2003; Weisberg & Robbs, 1997). The advertising industry is characterized by a strong horizontal segregation which results in a high concentration of men in the Creative Departments (Pueyo, 2010). One of the first studies was Hartman's (1988), which consisted of a survey of creative directors (84% of them men). According to this study, the creatives believed that there was parity in the creative departments and that both women and men had the same creative abili-

ties. However, they recognised that women did not have the same opportunities as men for promotions in the creative departments.

In Spain, advertising workforce is mostly feminine (Hermández, Martín & Beléndez, 2008). However, a survey from Martin (2007) revealed the absence of female creatives in advertising. The author suggested that there is a high degree of feminisation of the advertising industry, “even though only 1% of the female workers are in managerial positions [...]. The likelihood of a man reaching an executive position is eleven times higher than a woman” (p. 439). In her study, only 36% of the creatives were women. These figures are quite similar to those reported by Klein (2001, 5), who states that “women are poorly represented in the creative departments of advertising agencies”, where only 17% were writers and 14% art directors. Creative jobs are “being left in the hands of white, usually single males between 25 and 35” (Cuneo & Petreca, 1997: 25).

Other authors (Mallia, 2006; Pueyo, 2009) chose to investigate the occupational structure of the advertising industry by analysing the creative reviews published by journals in the industry. Mallia (2006) examined eleven years of *Adweek* magazine in which the editor identified the best advertisements from the previous year; Mallia’s goal was to evaluate the presence of female creatives in the industry reviews. The study concentrated on the period from 1996 to 2006 and revealed that women are severely infra-represented in the creative roles of the agencies. In Spain, Pueyo (2009) analysed the presence of women in the creative reviews of advertising magazines in the Spanish industry between 2004 and 2008 and concluded that women represent just 14% of Creative Directors, 8% of Executive Creative Directors and 1% of General Creative Directors. This gendered work division could lead to less salary and less job mobility (Pueyo, 2010).

Given the fact that general creative directors tend to be on the juries of advertising festivals, to professionally legitimise their work (West, Collins & Miciak, 2003: 25) we should assume that women would be a minority presence of women in festivals. To the day, no research has been conducted specifically to gain knowledge about presence of women in advertising festivals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO STUDY THE ABSENCE OF WOMEN ON FESTIVAL JURIES?

Despite high feminization of advertising courses, female creatives in the industry are few (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Pueyo, 2010; Kreshel, 2003). Lack of women in creative departments can be explained through two different concepts: ceiling glass and sticky soil (Martin, 2007). First concept refers to invisible barriers that prevent women to reach creative direction positions, while second one is about women always being in lower positions with lower salaries. The boys’ club culture, institutionalized in the industry by pervasive masculine norms, dominates

creative departments and may serve as a key barrier to acceptance for women and their progress in job hierarchy (Windels, Lee & Yeh, 2010; Mallia & Windels, 2011; Pueyo, 2010; Nixon, 2003). This locker room helps to maintain masculine hegemony (Gregory, 2009) and homophilous ties (Ibarra, 1992) that lead to individualistic organizational cultures (Mallia & Windels, 2011), where women don't fit (Nixon, 2003). Presence of women would put in danger this masculine area that tries to keep a child-like state where creativity can emerge (Gregory, 2009).

In addition to external barriers, women find personal barriers in their way to the top (Mallia, 2009). The dynamics of agencies affect women in different ways, but the most important would be the lack of social capital (Nixon, 2003). Women usually don't participate in informal networks that consist in socializing inside the creative department (ex. male jokes) and outside the office (ex. pubs), where important professional and organizational information may be exchanged (Gregory, 2009; Nixon, 2003). Consequently they don't generate collegial support and client contacts (Martín 2007; Mallia & Windels, 2011) neither in regular days nor awards days. Females experience tension due to a difficult work-life balance (Martin, 2007b), where childbearing and motherhood is a penalty for creative success (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Mallia, 2009). Many women leave mainstream agencies as a result of having to work for long hours without flex-time, flexi-place, or part-time arrangements as such policies are supposedly incompatible with creative departments dynamics (Mallia & Windels, 2011). And finally, females suffer from the lack of motivation of promotional interest due to a difference in priorities as opposed to men. (Mallia, 2009). A study with university students showed that their gender influenced in the importance given to family, spare time and community (Hernández, Martín & Beléndez, 2008). Another one, also with students, showed that, although they don't express gender discrimination if assigned with the task of choosing who will get the role of "creative director" they already perceive creative advertising to be male-dominant (Windels, Lee, Yeh, 2010).

Gender is fundamental for advertising narrative (Grow, 2006). If the most part of creatives are male, most part of selected ideas come from a masculine imaginary. Thus, social images in ads are based on the dominant masculine ideology. And this extends to advertisers who are males and share the same values, culture and identities (Roca & Pueyo, 2011). In a competitive department culture where political games need to be played (Mallia & Windels, 2011) women are relegated to a pink ghetto (Grow & Broyles, 2011), working mostly for traditionally non-award-winning accounts. They usually work for female-targeted products such as those related with beauty, cleaning and children (Roca & Pueyo, 2011b).

Social or public recognition is extremely important for creatives, because is fundamental as external motivation (Etayo & Del Rio, 2008). One can become a role model by winning awards, displaying work in professional press and even by writing books or being displayed in them. An example of this situation is the book *30 segundos de Gloria* (González Adrió, 2005), where top 10 Spanish creatives are men. Bosman (2005) explains that it is harder for women to earn recog-

dition from their colleagues than men. The festivals are basically a tool for networking in which the goal is to “get to know a handful of first-rate professionals a little better” (Antón, 2008). The lack of women as jurors means less support and acknowledgement from advertising industry (Roca & Pueyo, 2011). Many festivals are made up of male juries in which women only have a symbolic presence. So, creative standards are male established. Female way of thinking is little when referring to messages to consumer, and hardly noticeable when referring to industry. But it is not only about male dominating awards but the fact that creative women are receiving less support and recognition from the advertising industry than men do (Pueyo, 2010). It was not until 2004 that the International Advertising Festival at Cannes decided to influence the composition of the juries and stipulated that at least 25% of the members of the jury had to be women. The goal was to bring in the female standpoint given the fact that the juries that had been monopolised by men for years and, as a result, by a certain male kind of humour and creativity.

What would happen if there were a more prominent female presence on the festival juries? Would the leading agencies in the countries be different? Would the benchmark advertising be different? Would we see a different kind of advertising if women were the ultimate arbiters?

METHODOLOGY

The study presented herewith analyses the juries at the El Sol Iberoamerican Festival of Advertising Communication. The period chosen lasted eleven years, from 1998 to 2008 (both included). So the main goals of the study can be broken down as follows:

First. To learn about the presence of women on the festival’s juries according to the professional occupations of the jurors. *Second.* To ascertain the distribution of women according to their role on the festival’s juries. *Third.* To determine the presence of women on the festival’s juries according to the prize category being awarded. *Fourth.* To establish the annual evolution in the presence of women/men on the jury. *Fifth.* To lay down the annual evolution in the presence of women in the job of “creative director”. The results are presented as descriptive statistics comparing the presence of men and women.

WHY DID WE CHOOSE THE EL SOL IBEROAMERICAN FESTIVAL OF ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION?

The El Sol Iberoamerican Festival of Advertising Communication is the longest-standing and most prestigious festival held in Spain, and the one with the highest impact among creatives. In 2008, a total of 3,596 pieces were submitted to the competition, with participation by 17 countries along with more than 2,000 participants and 140 accredited journalists. The purpose of the festival is to encourage and foster advertising creativity in all its different facets and sections.

HOW DOES THE EL SOL IBEROAMERICAN FESTIVAL OF ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION WORK?

The juries of the festival in are made up as follows: 1) a festival director (top representative of all the members of the different juries), and 2) a jury for each category (such as film, TV, radio, graphic, integrated, interactive media, etc.), the juries usually have eight members and one president.

The prizes (called “Sols”, Spanish for Suns) in each category are divided into three levels: gold Sol, silver Sol and bronze Sol. However, the category for integrated campaigns (those including conventional media, online advertising and ambient or guerrilla marketing actions) has the unique feature of having the golden Sol called the “platinum Sol”.

Finally, the top honor at the festival is the Grand Prix of the Festival which awards one of the pieces that has already won in each of the categories in the festival and is regarded as the best beyond its category, medium or typology. The jury charged with handing out this prize is made up of the presidents of all the juries in the other categories.

HOW AND WHO GIVES THE PRIZES?

Once chosen for the short list (a smaller number of pieces among all the ones submitted for each category), the members of the jury deliberate, discuss and hold forth so that one piece can be awarded the prize. During this debate, the president of the jury acts as a moderator and leader. Finally, all the members vote. Each vote is equally weighted. In the case of a tie, more than one prize may be awarded (e.g. two golds, three silvers, etc.).

One cannot become a jury of El Sol out of personal request: the Executive Committee of the AEACP (*Asociación Española de Agencias de Comunicación Publicitaria*) is in charge of choosing the jury members, prestigious individuals in the world of advertising, preferably creatives themselves. They try to ensure that in their careers the jury members have demonstrated reliable criteria in their work as advertising creatives. Plus, the festival also has a director who is in charge of organising the festival as a whole.

SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

The sample in this study used secondary data from documents listing the jury members of the festivals. The members of the juries of the El Sol festival were broken down year by year. This analysis was divided into two different periods. In the first period (1998-2002), only Spanish agencies took part. In the second period, the festival opened up to participation by agencies in Latin America as well (2003-2008) (see table 1). All told, 57 juries were studied with more than 346 professionals who could vote and choose the most creative pieces in the Spanish advertising industry. The procedure used with the results was always comparative; that is, the presence of men and women was always compared. This provided a precise snapshot of who the judges of creativity are from the gender perspective.

RESULTS

The results that emerged from this study show figures from the period 1998-2008. Despite this, when analysing these figures, special emphasis was placed on the last five years because of the subject at hand: the presence of women on the juries.

The figures prior to the period 2003-2008 were mainly used to compare the changes that took place during this decade.

THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN ON JURIES (2003-2008)

Women's presence as members of the juries of the El Sol Iberoamerican Festival of Advertising Communication has risen 71% from the period 1998-2002 to the period 2003-2008. However, there is a significant difference absence of female juries (graph 1), which becomes all the more pronounced when analysed according to the jobs by the members of the juries. To wit, we found no women who were founding partners of companies, only 5% who were presidents and just 11.32% of women in position such as general management or creative direction (see table 2).

Another way of studying women's presence in the festival is the degree of responsibility they carry in it, i.e. their role in the jury. El Sol has a person ultimately in charge, the Festival Director. There's also a person in charge of each of the juries assembled: the president of that category. The other individuals on the juries are considered members. Thus, in the eleven years analysed of the El Sol festival (1998-2008), there has never been a female Festival Director and there has been only one female category president. Regarding the members of the juries, 37 (18.88%) women have achieved this appointment (see table 3). As a whole, the presence of women from 2003-2008 only reached 16.67% of the total, with 38 women compared to 190 men (see table 4).

THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN ACCORDING TO THE CATEGORY

The categories in which women have the strongest showing are those that are not related to creativity: The common feature of these categories is that the juries are not composed of staff from creative departments but of advertisers (40%), journalists (44%) and staff from media agencies (32%). In the categories associated with the creative department, the presence of women once again drops to 6.67% of the members of the category of interactive media, 10.34% in the category of promotional marketing and 10.68% in the broad category of creative pieces (see table 5).

FEMALE CREATIVES AT THE FESTIVAL

In the past ten years only 10.29% of the creative directors participating as jury members of El Sol have been women, an absence that is a reflection of the dearth of female creative directors in advertising agencies. The presence of women in creative director positions has only risen 2.64 points in the two periods studied

(see table 6).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results presented enable us to reach certain relevant conclusions. *First.* Women just represent 16.67% of the members of the festival juries (including unspecified positions). The presence of women in the position of creative director hardly reaches 12% in the period 2003-08. Lack of creative women is not new in Spanish market (Pueyo, 2009; Martín, 2007) or others markets as U.K. (Klein, 2001). Few women were expected to be found in el Sol, because dominant culture in creative departments is highly masculine (Nixon, 2003) and occupational stereotypes are firmly established (Grow & Broyles, 2011). Thus, their presence was as poor as half if compared with female professionals working in creative department (Martin, 2007). *Second.* Women do not reach high levels of responsibility in the festival. There has never been a female Festival Director. The data also indicates that only one female jury president in the past ten years. Their overall presence on the juries as members is 18.88%. This data confirm previous results about lack of women as winners (Grow & Broyles, 2011). *Third.* We can see headway in women's presence on the juries, although not significant progress: there was a shift from 13.31 men for every woman in the period 1998-2002 to 6.22 men for every woman in the period 2003-2008. *Fourth.* The categories in which women have a higher presence are those not linked to creativity: advertisers (40%), press (44%) and media (32%). *Fifth.* The presence of women in creative direction as members of the jury is merely symbolic, as they only account for 10.29% in the period studied (1998-2008). Therefore, the selection criterion for creative quality is mainly male, which dovetails with Bosman's assessment (2005) that the presence of females at advertising festivals is largely symbolic.

This study has a main limitation. It focuses only in one festival in Spain, El Sol. Qualitative research with male and female creatives would also have enrich this study, contextualizing quantitative data shown. Stepping into the future we recommend that there be more quantitative studies exploring other international creative advertising awards (Cannes, Clio, etc.). Comparative studies, among countries could be particularly insightful. It is our hope that this study will made visible the invisibility of creative women in festivals and will show gender biases within advertising creative industry. If women are not ignored as consumers (Warner, 2005; Kanner, 2004; and Thomas & McSweeney, 2008), they should not be underrepresented as creatives, not at the departments of advertising agencies, neither in advertising awards. Festivals should encourage women to be judges, and try to achieve at least as the same percentage that can be found in agencies. Taking an idea from Broyles & Grow (2008), keeping women's voices in creative departments would give a better balance to the messages agencies create, moreover, allowing women's voices in festivals could give, as a result, a less laddish and more democratic environment reflecting diversity of society. Cannes started this process allowing jurors with 25% of women (Trosclair, 2009).

David Roca Correa is an Associate Professor of Advertising Creativity and Director of the Interactive Strategy and Creativity Master Degree at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain). He earned his PhD from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Dr. Roca's scholarly work focuses on advertising creativity, with a current funded research exploring the gender dynamics in advertising creative

departments. Dr. Roca's more recent published work is an article entitled "Vanishing acts: creative women in Spain and the United States" (*International Journal of Advertising*, 2012). He has received grants to develop his research from the Catalan and Spanish government. He is in charge of GRP, the Advertising and Public Relations research group at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

Isam Alegre Rodríguez is a PhD student in Advertising and Public Relations at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. His research work is focused on the teaching of advertising creativity at university from a cross-cultural

point of view. He has taught creativity and design courses and is also the coordinator of the Interactive Creativity and Strategy Master Degree. Other lines of his research are gender dynamics in advertising creative departments.

Natalia Pueyo Ayhan is a PhD student in Advertising and Public Relations at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Her research work is focused on women profes-

sional role inside advertising agencies and its implications on the final product. Other lines of her research are creativity, children advertising and bibliometric studies.

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Appendix

Graph 1. Total amount of jury members and the amount of women in El Sol Iberoamerican Festival (1998-2008)

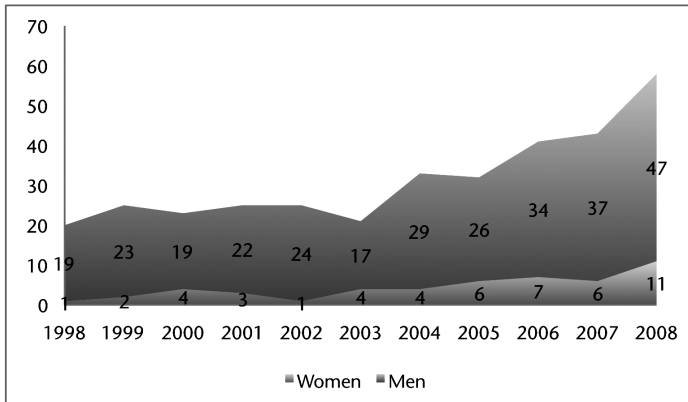


Table 1. Changes in the name of the El Sol Iberoamerican Festival of Advertising Communication (1986-2008)

Area	Period	Name
Spain	1986 - 1993	Film and Television Advertising Festival
	1994 - 2002	Advertising Festival of San Sebastián
Spain and Latin America	2003 - 2007	El Sol. Iberoamerican Advertising Festival (the festival internationalised in 2003)
	2008	El Sol. The Iberoamerican Festival of Advertising Communication

Table 2. Distribution of the El SOL jury (1998-2008) according to professional occupation and gender (%)

Professional occupation	Spanish period 1998-2002		International period 2003-2008		Change in female presence
	women	men	women	men	
CEOs	0.00% (0)	100.00% (5)	20.00% (3)	80.00% (12)	Infinite (+3)
Founding partners	0.00% (0)	100.00% (2)	0.00% (0)	100.00% (5)	0.00% (0)
Presidents	0.00% (0)	100.00% (10)	5.56% (2)	94.44% (34)	Infinite (+2)
Vice Presidents	0.00% (0)	100.00% (5)	28.57% (4)	71.43% (10)	Infinite (+4)
General management in the agency or company	13.33% (2)	86.67% (13)	11.32% (6)	88.68% (47)	50.00% (+4)
Creative direction	8.96% (6)	91.04% (61)	11.56% (8)	88.41% (61)	25.00% (+2)
Non-creative direction	0.00% (0)	0.00% (0)	57.14% (4)	42.86% (3)	Infinite (+4)
Non-managerial positions	20.00% (2)	80.00% (8)	33.33% (4)	66.67% (8)	25.00% (+2)
unspecified	25.00% (1)	75.00% (3)	41.18% (7)	58.82% (10)	85.71% (+6)
Overall total	9.32% (11)	90.68% (107)	16.67% (38)	83.33% (190)	71.05% (+ 27)

Table 3. Distribution of the jury according to their role on the jury and gender (%)

Role	1998-2002		2003-2008		Change in female presence
	women	men	women	men	
Festival Director	0.00% (0)	100.00% (5)	0.00% (0)	100.00% (6)	0.00% (0)
Category president	0.00% (0)	100.00% (10)	4.00% (1)	96.00% (25)	100.00% (+1)
Member	10.68% (11)	89.32% (92)	18.88% (37)	81.12% (159)	70.27% (+26)
Total	9.32% (11)	90.68% (107)	16.67% (38)	83.33% (190)	71.05% (+27)

Table 4. Annual evolution in the presence of women/men on the juries of El SOL 1998-2008 (%)

Year	Woman	Man	Women/Men difference (in percentage points)	For each woman there were...
1998	5% (1)	95% (19)	-90	19 men
1999	8% (2)	92% (23)	-84	11.5 men
2000	17% (4)	83% (19)	-66	4.75 men
2001	12% (3)	88% (22)	-76	7.3 men
2002	4% (1)	96% (24)	-92	24 men
Total 1998 - 2002	9% (11)	91% (107)	-82	13.31 men
2003	19% (4)	81% (17)	-62	4.25 men
2004	12% (4)	88% (29)	-76	7.25 men
2005	19% (6)	81% (26)	-62	4.33 men
2006	17% (7)	83% (34)	-66	4.85 men
2007	14% (6)	86% (37)	-72	6.16 men
2008	19% (11)	81% (47)	-62	4.27 men
Total 2003 - 2008	16.7% (38)	83.3% (190)	-66,66	6.22 men
Overall total	14% (49)	86% (297)	100% (346)	

Table 5. Distribution of the EL SOL (1998-2008) juries according to category and gender (%)

Category	1998-2002		2003-2008		Change in female presence
	women	men	women	men	
Advertisers	--	--	40.00% (2)	60.00% (3)	100.00% (2)
Film, TV, radio, graphic, integrated,	10.13% (8)	89.87% (71)	10.68% (11)	89.32% (92)	27.00% (+3)
Press	--	--	44.00% (11)	56.00% (14)	--
Promotional marketing	--	--	10.34% (3)	89.66% (26)	--
Media	--	--	32.00% (8)	88.68% (17)	--
Federation of Advertising Film Producers	22.22% (2)	77.78% (7)	--	--	--
Interactive Media	4.00% (1)	96.00% (24)	6.67% (2)	93.33% (28)	50.00% (+1)
Other	0.00% (0)	100.00% (5)	9.09% (1)	90.91% (10)	100.00% (+1)
Total 1998 - 2002	9.32% (11)	90.68% (107)	16.67% (38)	83.33% (190)	71.05% (+27)

* The boxes marked with "--" indicate that these categories did not exist at that time. Changes in categories and functioning seem to be a constant dynamic over the history of the festival.

Table 6. Annual evolution in the presence of women on the jury with the professional occupation of "creative director"

Year	Creative director	
	women	men
1998	0.00% (0)	100.00% (5)
1999	7.14% (1)	92.86% (13)
2000	14.29% (2)	85.71% (12)
2001	18.75% (3)	81.25% (13)
2002	0.00% (0)	100.00% (18)
Total 1998-2002	8.95% (6)	91.04% (61)
2003	20.00% (2)	80.00% (8)
2004	10.00% (1)	90.00% (9)
2005	11.11% (1)	88.89% (8)
2006	30.00% (3)	70.00% (7)
2007	0.00% (0)	100.00% (17)
2008	7.69% (1)	92.31% (12)
Total 2003-2008	11.59% (8)	88.40% (61)
Overall total	10.29% (14)	89.71% (122)

