



Sofia Coppola Wins Best Director at Cannes Film Festival

Kayla Pantano (May 30, 2017)



On the 70th anniversary of the cinema's most prestigious festival, Sofia Coppola made history as the second female filmmaker to win the best director prize for her film "The Beguiled."

The 2017 [Cannes Film Festival](#) [2] culminated on Sunday with an award ceremony in history-making fashion. Italian American [Sofia Coppola](#) [3] became the second female director in the festival's 70 years to win best director. The last was Russian filmmaker [Yuliya Solntseva](#) [4] in 1961 for her dramatic tale of Nazi resistance in the Soviet Union, [The Story of Flaming Years](#) [5]. Coppola won for [The Beguiled](#) [6], an atmospheric thriller set during the Civil War.

Sofia Carmina Coppola

Daughter of the famed [Francis Ford Coppola](#) [7]—best known for directing [The Godfather](#) [8] trilogy, Sofia followed in her father's footsteps and is now a screenwriter, director, producer, and actress. In 2003, she received the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for her comedy-drama [Lost in Translation](#) [9]. In 2010, with the drama [Somewhere](#) [10], she became the first American woman (and fourth American filmmaker) to win the Golden Lion, the top prize at the [Venice Film Festival](#)



[11].

Her most recent award is significant for both female filmmakers and, of course, for Coppola personally. The last time she competed for the Palme was in 2006 with [Marie Antoinette](#) [12] for which she was notoriously booed. This makes her victory all the more celebratory.

Cannes Best Director Award

When Jury President [Pedro Almodóvar](#) [13] announced the Best Director prize for the *The Beguiled* helmer, juror [Maren Ade](#) [14] accepted the prize for the absent Coppola. Ade ended the speech on Coppola's behalf by thanking her parents, as well as director [Jane Campion](#) [15] for "being a role model and supporting women filmmakers." The [Top of the Lake](#) [16] creator and [Bright Star](#) [17] director happens to be the only woman to have won the Palme d'Or. She claimed the prize in 1993 for [The Piano](#) [18], which also landed her an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay.

While Coppola was not present, she also released this statement: "I was thrilled to get this movie made and it's such an exciting start to be honored in Cannes. I'm thankful to my great team and cast and to Focus and Universal for their support of women-driven films."

Now that Cannes has honored two women directors, it is officially ahead of the Oscars, which has honored only one, [Kathryn Bigelow](#) [19] in 2009 for her low-budget Iraq war film, [The Hurt Locker](#) [20].

Plot, Stars, and Release Date: The Beguiled

The Beguiled is an adaptation of [Thomas Cullinan](#) [21]'s Civil War novel about a wounded Union Army soldier, who is found by the residents of an all-girls boarding school in 1864 Virginia. While [Don Siegel](#) [22] directed [his own adaptation](#) [23] with [Clint Eastwood](#) [24] in 1971, Coppola's take is more explicitly a story of female empowerment. [Nicole Kidman](#) [25], who won the 70th Anniversary Prize, plays the headmistress of the secluded school. The film also stars [Elle Fanning](#) [26], [Kirsten Dunst](#) [27], and [Colin Farrell](#) [28].

The Beguiled will be released in the US in select theaters on June 23.

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