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Lisa Cholodenko: 'The Kids Are All Right,' But the Road Was Rough

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First, let's get the Best Actress vs. Best Supporting Actress positioning controversy out of the way. Lisa Cholodenko, the co-writer and director of "The Kids Are All Right," thinks both of her leading actresses belong in the Best Actress category, and would never advise Julianne Moore to follow the advice of some and campaign in the supporting category so as not to split the vote with Annette Bening.

"To me, being political about it is counter to the spirit of the film that I wrote and the film that they signed up for," Cholodenko told theWrap. "They both did an amazing job, I think they're both leading parts, and I would *never* encourage either of them to compromise their integrity because somebody is saying that if you do this you can win that."

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It's no accident that Cholodenko's film, in which Bening and Moore play a lesbian couple whose teenaged children seek out the anonymous sperm donor who unbeknownst to himself is their father, is a commercial and critical hit that has found itself in the thick of the awards race.

According to its director (*left, between Bening and Moore*), at least the commercial part of that was the plan all along.

"It was designed to be seen and released on a much wider level than my other movies,"

said Cholodenko on the eve of the film's DVD release, which takes place on Tuesday.

"Along my path, I've realized that this comedy/drama balance is something that's really interesting to me, and I feel like authentic to my voice," says the director whose previous films include "High Art" and "Laurel Canyon." "And I realized if I wanted to up the comedy and put it in more human relief with the drama, I might be able to make a film that had more commercial appeal."

A key to that, she said, was bringing in Stuart Blumberg ("The Girl Next Door," "Keeping the Faith") as her co-writer. "Stuart's got this background in a more commercial kind of comedic writing, and he has that craft down. And I've been doing this thing that's more psychological, which I would love to be able to bridge with his thing. I thought, if we could do it, we'd get something that's complicated and really gratifying."

Cholodenko had the concept and the broad strokes when she began work with Blumberg, who had served as a sperm donor in college. The director, who is in a long-term relationship with musician Wendy Melvoin, also knew the world she wanted to put onscreen – one where the fact that the leading characters are gay is not what drives the plot or prompts the central conflict.

"I understand this couple, I know this world, and it's a world that I want to see on the screen," she said. "This isn't about that per se, but I think that starting from a place that I can identify with, that I'll have energy for, will allow me to dig deeper into issues and themes and ideas that are universal."